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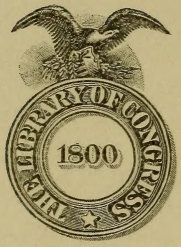

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FATHER SIMON.

MAGDALENA DIAZ.

MARIA CANDELARIA.

AN HISTORIC DRAMA

FROM

AMERICAN ABORIGINAL LIFE.

BY

DANIEL G. BRINTON, M. D.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.
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INTRODUCTORY.

Of the many revolts by which the Red Men of America have endeavored to throw off the yolk of their white conquerors, none has impressed me as possessing more striking situations than that of the Tzentals, in 1712. In it, among other features, one witnesses the extraordinary powers which women not unfrequently exerted among American tribes. In the person of its maiden heroine, the designer and leader of the revolt, we have a veritable aboriginal Joan of Arc, though one doomed to witness her cherished plans end in disaster.

When minutely studying the causes and incidents of her attempt, they presented themselves to my mind in such dramatic relations that I have endeavored to convey a knowledge of them to others in this form. The age, the scene, and the accessories are, however, so unfamiliar that they require somewhat full explanations, which I present in an introduction and notes.

§ 1. *The Scene of the Drama.*

The extreme southeastern State of the Republic of Mexico is called Chiápa, or Las Chiápas. It adjoins Guatemala and Tabasco. Most of its surface is a plateau, some three thousand or more feet in elevation, broken by ranges of precipitate mountains and deep valleys shutting in rapid streams. Its area is about twice that of the State of New Jersey and its climate is generally healthful and pleasant, the tropical heats being tempered by the altitude. Vast forests cover much of the

soil, and the population is scanty, and mostly of native blood. "Here," writes Mr. Bancroft, "is an earthly Paradise, the charms of which have been enjoyed with enthusiastic delight by the few lovers of nature who have penetrated its solitudes." [1]

The capital is San Cristóbal, formerly called San Cristóbal de Ciudad Real. It is beautifully situated in a broad valley 6,280 feet above sea level. It has a population of about 8,000 souls, and is the seat of a university and the metropolitan city of the diocese. The second bishop of the see was the famous Bartolomé de Las Casas, known as "the apostle of the Indians," whose scorching denunciations of the cruelties of the conquerors remain as noble evidence of his sympathy with oppressed humanity.

About forty-five miles northeast of San Cristóbal was situated the native village of Cancuc, in and near which the events of this drama took place. It was burned to the ground by the Spaniards, and the surviving inhabitants removed to the modern hamlet of the name, some miles to the south. The crumbling walls of the church and a few mounds of debris are all that now indicate its site.[2]

§ 2. *The Tzental Indians.*

The principal native tribe in Chiápas is the Tzentals. They are a branch of the widespread Mayan stock who, at the time of the Conquest, and long before, occupied

[1] H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific States*, Vol. IV., p. 288.

[2] A description of the locality is given by Theobert Maler in the *Revue d'Ethnographie*, Tome III., pp. 306–7.

Yucatan, Western Honduras, most of Guatemala and Tabasco. Nearly all its branches had risen to a degree of civilization, in several respects the highest encountered by the whites in the New World. They were agriculturists, artisans and merchants, their architecture in brick and stone was imposing, their governments were centralized and powerful, and they had developed a system of hieroglyphic writing far superior to the pictography of other tribes.

There is reason to believe that this civilization had its origin in the territory of the Tzentals. Not only do the lines of archæology and linguistics lead to that conclusion, but in their area some of the most extensive and majestic of the ancient ruins are located. Palenque and Ocozingo, Comocalco and Cintla (Tzentla), are names of such now familiar through the writing of Stephens, Charnay and other travelers. There are scores of other ruins, scarcely less remarkable than these, scattered from the shores of the Gulf to the crest of the Cordillera.

The first European to touch their coast was Juan de Grijalva (1518); but the earliest explorer of the lowlands was Hernan Cortes (1524). He reported it as densely populated with numerous cities, in which an active trade was carried on, the chief commodities being cacao, cotton, dye stuffs, feathers, paints, resin, wax, salt, gum copal, woven goods, pottery, precious stones, beads from sea shells, slaves, and gold of low alloy. The cities contained lofty temples, one of the largest of which was dedicated to a goddess.[1]

[1] The description of his journey is given by Cortes in his *Carta Quinta de Relacion*, which has been repeatedly published.

A few months earlier (Dec., 1523) Diego de Godoy attacked and captured Chamolla in the highlands, about seven miles north of San Cristóbal. It was the principal town of the Zotzils, a tribe adjoining the Tzentals, and of the same language and blood.[1]

The apparent submission which followed these invasions lasted until 1528, when the Tzentals and allied tribes broke out in sudden insurrection. An experienced soldier, Diego de Mazariegos, was sent to reduce them. By a series of skilful movements he succeeded in driving their main body to the edge of a precipice, where surrender or death was the only alternative. The large majority of them, men, women and children, chose the latter, and cast themselves into the abyss rather than submit to the detested whites.[2]

§ 3. *The Insurrection of the Tzentals in 1712.*

The present drama represents some of the closing scenes in the insurrection of the Tzentals in 1712.

Our knowledge of this remarkable passage in American aboriginal history is drawn exclusively from Spanish writers, bitterly hostile to the native cause, incapable of appreciating the sentiments which inspired the insurgents, prompt to credit every evil story about them, and determined to deny them everything good or noble in thought or act.

These accounts are somewhat fragmentary, and in

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[1] "Relacion hecha por Diego Godoy á Hernando Cortes," in the *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, Tome XXII., p. 465, sqq.

[2] Herrera, *Historia General de las Indias*, Dec. III., p. 174.

places contradictory, and several are still in manuscript. On a later page I shall give a list of them, but here it will be sufficient to tell briefly the story of the revolt as I have made it out from their pages.

In the winter of 1711–12, there lived in the village of Cancuc an Indian girl, about nineteen years of age, named Maria Candelaria, the latter word being the Spanish equivalent for the English "Candlemas," from which festival of the Church it had doubtless been assigned her.

She appears to have been an orphan, as her aunt, Magdalena Diaz, is mentioned, and her uncle, Sebastian Gomez, but not her parents.

This uncle is alleged to have been a priest of the dreaded secret organization among the Indians, known as the Nagualists, a fraternity which I have described fully in another work, and some account of which I shall give on a later page. Suffice it here to say that its spirit was intensely hostile to the Spanish government, and to Christianity, as represented by the Roman Catholic Church.

Doubtless Maria imbibed these sentiments early and deeply; but that she was merely the tool of Gomez, as is stated by one writer, is contradicted by the course of events and by the testimony of another author (Ordoñez), who attributes to her alone "all the plans of the insurrection." With a deep religious temperament, brooding long on the wrongs inflicted on her people, she passed into that condition of spiritual exaltation which precedes and prepares a revelation of the divine prescience.

On a certain day in the early spring of 1712, at a short distance from the village, the Holy Virgin Mary appeared to Maria, and commanded her to call together the people and have them erect a chapel on that spot, in which she and her uncle, not white priests, were to conduct the worship. The mandate was promptly obeyed by the villagers, the chapel was erected, and in it Maria Candelaria, who then took the name of Maria Angel de la Virgen, and Sebastian Gomez, who adopted that of Gomez de la Gloria, performed the sacred rites.

They soon revealed other intentions than that of merely repeating prayers. The chapel became the center of an active propaganda of national liberty. Men and women were instructed in the plans for the overthrow of the white invaders, and were sent forth to incite all the Tzental towns, and to those of affiliated tribes such as the Chols, Quelens and Zotzils—some say, far into Tabasco and Oaxaca.[1]

In all this Maria was the leading spirit. In her chapel, immediately behind the altar which had been erected to the Holy Virgin, was stretched a screen of Indian matting. When the faithful were assembled, she would retire behind this for a short time and, reappearing, filled with the divine ecstasy, would pronounce the decrees of Holy Mary and prophetic utterances concerning the struggle in preparation. She chose from her own sex some of her most effective acolytes and apostles.

The parish priest of Cancuc at that time was Father

[1] Ordoñez y Aguiar estimates that in Chiapas alone 70,000 natives were interested in the conspiracy. *Historia del Cielo y de la Tierra*, MS.

Simon de Lara, who must have been a non-resident, as it was some months before he heard of these strange doings. When the news reached him, he hastened to the village, convened the congregation, and ordered Maria to be brought before him. She appeared and, standing in the midst of the assembly, with entire calmness related the apparition of the Virgin and her command to construct the chapel. The Church, however, claims the monopoly of miracles, and Father Simon was far from pleased with this encroachment on its preserves. Probably also, he had some inkling that the chapel served other than religious aims. He therefore ordered it torn down and the services discontinued.

No attention was paid to his order, so he obtained from the Bishop of the Diocese, "the most illustrious Don Juan Bautista Alvarez de Toledo," a positive injunction to the same effect. This was also disregarded.

Meanwhile the conspirators were rapidly pushing their work and completing their organization. Thirty-two towns of the Tzentals agreed to lend their aid, and many adjacent tribes promised to join the league as soon as it had achieved a marked success. Fighting men to the alleged nnmber of fifteen thousand were enlisted. Their arms were spears, slings (in the use of which many were singularly expert), scythes, *machetes*, clubs and a few muskets. They acknowledged Maria as their leader, and in loyalty to her adopted the title, "Soldiers of the Virgin." Their military commander, or "captain general," was Nicolas Vasquez, a native of Cancuc. On the civil side, an executive council of twelve members, called "major-domos," was appointed by Maria and Gomez to carry out their instructions.

The plan evidently was at a concerted signal to massacre the white male population in all the villages, and then to unite the forces and march rapidly on San Cristóbal. This city captured, the affiliated tribes would undoubtedly unite with them.

The plan failed through the precipitate action of some villages and the timid procrastination of others. Premature outbreaks occurred at Diasole and Chilun. At the latter town on Trinity Sunday, June, 1712, the congregation was attacked during the mass by several hundred Indians, the three officiating priests were slain at the altar, and men, women and children were cut to pieces on the floor of the church.

Similar disorders rapidly followed. The towns of Tenango, San Martin, Ocozingo, Tonalá, Occhuc, Hueteupan, Yajalon and others revolted amid scenes of more or less bloodshed. At Occhuc, two friars were thrown into pits and stoned to death; at Simijóvel, they burnt the church and hanged the priest; at Tonalá, they slew Father de Andrada at the altar; and so on, the ecclesiastics being the objects of their especial hatred.

By the beginning of August the insurrection was at its flood-tide, and on the tenth of that month a grand festival was held at Cancuc in celebration of its success. Maria presided as high priestess and queen of the liberated nation. By her command, all the silver vessels, ornaments, money and books, which had been taken from the churches were brought to Cancuc and placed in her custody. They were concealed somewhere by her order and were never afterwards recovered.

During the festival a general council of war was held,

at which she also presided and promulgated the laws of the new state, "the main bearings of which," says the historian Ordoñez, "were that there should not remain a trace to indicate that a European had ever stepped on the soil of her land." Her words, according to another, were that thenceforth there should be in her domain "neither bishop nor priest, taxes nor king."

On that day Maria Candelaria was at the acme of her power and glory, undisputed and absolute mistress of her nation and its resources, commanding a victorious army of many thousand warriors who idolized her as more than a queen, almost as an actual, living goddess.

But soon the cankers of envy, cowardice and treachery made themselves felt. Word came from Chamolla that it would not join the league; Sinacantla, which had joined, was induced to withdraw by the efforts of its priest; some of Maria's prominent supporters in Cancuc itself, infected by fear or bribed by Spanish gold, began to express doubts of success and advise negotiations; even Maria's own aunt, Magdalena Diaz, jealous of her niece's success, denounced her as an imposter, and offered herself as the only member of her family who was divinely inspired!

In the face of such perfidy and poltroonery, and in such perilous surroundings, what could Maria do but resort to the severest measures? It is reported that she did; that she ordered the chief malcontents to be burned alive and her aunt to be hanged, Spanish soldiers and spies to be flogged to death, and thieving natives to suffer a similar fate. Her laws were iron, and were carried out with an iron will. Only such implacable justice, she

believed, could save her nation's cause in that desperate crisis. If such cruelty shocks us, we must bear in mind that in that time and place it was as much a trait of the white as of the red race, of the Christian soldiery as of the heathen insurgents.

Meanwhile the general plan of campaign was actively pushed. A strong body of warriors was sent to Los Moyos on the main road to Tabasco, to check the Spanish reinforcements coming from that province under its *alcalde mayor*, Don Juan Francisco de Medina Cachen; and another occupied a strong position at Hueteopan, commanding another main road from the south. Cancuc itself was fortified with an earthen wall surmounted by palisades, with a deep exterior ditch.

The main aim of the campaign, the capture of San Cristóbal, was kept steadily in view. The chief strategic outpost of that city was San Pedro Huistlán, a village eighteen miles north of it, admirably situated for military purposes, and defended by a garrison of one hundred musketeers under the command of Don Francisco de Monge.

The capture of this position was indispensable to an advance upon San Cristóbal, and Vasquez clearly perceived it. Toward the close of September he marched upon it at the head—say the Spanish chroniclers—of fifteen thousand warriors; though probably five thousand would be more correct.

Accustomed to the servile subjection of the natives, the Spaniards had awakened slowly to a perception of the dangers which threatened them. For months after the massacre at Chilun, little preparations for war were made.

At length they began, characteristically, with a public procession and prayer (*plegaria*) to a famous image of the Virgin de la Caridad, at San Cristóbal. When Huistlán was threatened, the *alcalde mayor* of San Cristóbal, Don Pedro Gutierrez, gathered some soldiers and proceeded to its relief; but his slow movements and ignorance of military matters rendered his assistance of little avail. The superior natural advantages of the position, however, enabled Monge to hold it successfully, and to repulse with considerable loss several desperate assaults of the insurgents.

It became evident to the Audiencia General of Guatemala, to which department Chiápas was at that time attached, that greater energy was necessary. Don Pedro Gutierrez was relieved, and the command given to Don Nicolas de Segovia, an officer of the old *conquistador* type, and already experienced in the tactics of Indian warfare. He promptly enlisted several hundred men whom he armed with muskets, and having no artillery, he employed a Dominican prior, brother Francisco Montoya, who understood the art of casting, to construct a good-sized mortar. The rumors about this frightful and unheard-of engine of destruction terrified the Indians, who spoke of it with awe as "the mother of muskets."

By about the 20th of October he was ready, and marched to the relief of Huistlán. A sanguinary battle ensued. The Indians under Vasquez fought desperately, but were defeated and put to flight with heavy loss. Segovia marched rapidly in pursuit, and threw his forces into Occhuc, a strong position about twelve miles from Cancuc, and on a main road to that place. He repulsed

several assaults of the natives, and in a few days had completed his preparations for the siege of their main position and capital, Cancuc. About November 10th he moved forward and camped in immediate proximity to it.

Here he was joined by the President of the Audiencia General, Don Toribio Cocío, with important reinforcements, which raised the effective of the army to over a thousand well-armed soldiers. The President, in his official report, largely ignores Segovia's services, but it is evident from the other accounts that the latter alone was the military head of the expedition, and deserves the credit of its success.

The defeat of the native forces at Huistlán was a severe moral as well as a military blow to the insurgents. The faith of many of them in their virgin prophetess began to waver. Other losses soon followed. A band of their warriors entrenched in a strong position near the village of San Martin endeavored to check the advance of President Cocío. They were routed and the town burned to the ground by his orders. Intimidated by this example, several villages offered their submission.

Their general, Vasquez, had lost his prestige but not his life. He escaped at Huistlán, but nothing more is heard of him. Evidently both Maria and her warriors demanded a general who was more skilful or more fortunate. She selected and appointed one in the person of Juan Garcia.

From some expressions in regard to him this Garcia appears to have been of mixed blood. The energy, bravery and skill which he exhibited have won for him the eulogiums of later historians. That he fell a martyr

to the cause of national freedom deserves to ennoble his memory. There is no direct evidence that he bore to Maria the relation I have assigned in the drama; but the facts, that he was her personal choice, and that his devotion to her ended only with his death, permit us to imagine it.

The end was rapidly approaching. Segovia led several unsuccessful assaults upon the walls and entrenchments around Cancuc, in one of which he was wounded. His troops were foiled by the vigilance of Garcia and his followers.

At length, on November 21st, the Spanish forces were concentrated and a determined charge made on the walls. After a hot fight, a breach was effected, the natives gave way, and the Spanish soldiery poured into the town. The torch was quickly applied to its combustible huts, and the inhabitants fled in disorder.

Juan Garcia did not yield. Gathering around him as many of the fugitives as he could, he retired to the slope of the mountain and hastily threw up entrenchments. Segovia pushed forward, and attacked his position. Garcia fought to the last, but was finally overpowered, captured, and promptly hanged, along with his chief companions in arms.

And what became of Maria and her uncle in this annihilation of their town, their army and their hopes? No one knows. It is certain that they were not killed or captured, either then or later; and no promise of reward or threat of punishment could ever after tempt their tribesmen to disclose their fate. Vain were the persistent efforts of the military and clergy to trace them. They were never heard of more.

Such is the brief story of the revolt of the Tzentals in 1712. Other details about it need not occupy us. Its vivid events center around one strange figure, the virgin priestess, the inspired champion of her nation's liberty, the ecstatic sibyl of her country's destinies. It ended with her disappearance.

My effort in the drama has been to narrate these facts with general historical fidelity; to portray faithfully the conflicting sentiments of those who participated in the struggle; and to frame the whole as accurately as possible in the costumes, coloring and inspiration of the time and place.

The position which Maria assumed as leader of the revolt was strictly analogous to that of several other heroines of the Mayan tribes known to history. In the earliest annals of the conquest we read of Coamizagual, queen and sole ruler of the state of Cerquin in Honduras, which she had founded by her own valor and skill, and adorned with imposing structures in stone, still remaining to attest her greatness.[1] In the latest insurrections the story is repeated. When the Tzentals, in 1869, again revolted, the most prominent figure was the "mystical woman," as she was called, Augustina Gomez Checheb, the oracle of the ancient gods and chief inciter to war;[2] and in 1885, when the Kekchis of Guatemala, under the

[1] Herrera, *Historia de las Indias Occidentales*, Dec. IV. Lib. VIII., Cap. 4. Cerquin was close to the celebrated ruined city of Copan.

[2] Vicente Pinèda, *Historia de las Sublevaciones Indigenas en Chiapas*. Cap. IV. She was known to the whites as "Santa Rosa." (Theobert Maler, in *Révue d'Ethnographie*, Tome III., p. 309.)

leadership of Juan de la Cruz, attacked the white forces, it was still a woman, an inspired virgin, who gave them their orders in the gloomy cave-temple of Xucaneb.[1]

The appointment of a woman to the primacy of the priesthood in the native religion of the Tzentals dates back to their famed culture hero Votán, himself. By the breath of his mouth he hollowed out his cave temple in the rocks near Tlazoaloyan, and in it stored the sacred books and magical images. On his departure, he assigned it to a number of custodians, and as chief of them all ordained a high priestess, who was always to be succeeded by one of her own sex. So it continued until 1691, when, as Votán still delayed his return, the Christian custodian revealed the secret to her bishop, who promptly burned the holy relics in the town square.[2]

To some it may seem that the sentiments attributed to Maria are at times above what an Indian girl could have developed. I would ask such readers to bear in mind that she belonged to the highest type of the red race; to a tribe many of whom could at that time read and write in their own language as well as in Spanish; as is clearly shown by one of her laws that no one should be appointed to a high position in her state who could not read; and who were as intelligent and certainly less bigoted than their white instructors.[3] Not, therefore, the savage of

[1] Dr. Carl Sapper, in *Internat. Archiv für Ethnographie*, 1895, p. 205.

[2] The bishop was Nuñez de la Vega, who narrates the incident himself in his *Constituciones Diocesanas*, fol. 7, and gives a list of the objects found in the cave.

[3] The Tzentál dialect was reduced to writing first by Father Domingo de Ara, who died in 1572. His manu-

our western plains, nor yet the semi-civilized Aztec or Maya of the time of Cortes, represents the native American with whom I am dealing, but the originally most advanced of the race after two hundred years of further development under conditions of European civilization and Christian instruction, such as they were.

To others it may appear incongruous that, along with a rejection of Christianity and a return to heathen practices, some of the tenets of the Roman Church, especially its Mariolatry and its saint-worship, should be in part retained. This, however, is literally true to-day of the independent Santa Cruz Indians of Yucatan, and is constantly disclosed in the essentially heathen prayers of the

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script dictionary of it, two copies of which are in my possession (Spanish and Tzentál), contains about ten thousand words. It was completed in 1560. A considerable number of devotional works were composed in the tongue by Father de Ara, Father Manuel Diez, Father Bartholomé Temporal and others, concerning which the inquiring reader may consult the Abbé Brasseur's *Bibliothèque Mexico-Guatemalienne* (Paris, 1871), and J. C. Pilling's *Bibliography of North American Languages*. The natives also wrote much in their own tongue, as is especially mentioned by Nuñez de la Vega, in his *Constituciones Diocesanas del Obispado de Chiàpas* (Rome, 1701). These native writings were principally about their astrology, magic and genealogies, and for that reason were destroyed by the Catholic priests wherever discovered. One of them, which belonged to Don Ordoñez y Aguiar, canon of the cathedral of San Cristóbal, and a local antiquary, was seen by Don Felix de Cabrera in the latter part of the last century, and is quite fully described by him in a work which has been translated into English and appended to Captain Antonio del Rio's description of the ruins of Palenque (London, 1822).

Nagualists and padriños which have been published by various writers.[1]

Again, the monotheism which is expressed at the close of the second act is distinctively native American, as I have shown in my *Myths of the New World*;[2] and the sentiments of human brotherhood and charity are such as were attributed to the teachings of the hero-god Quetzalcoatl, long before Cortes sighted the shores of Anahuac, and to those of Tunapa in Peru.[3]

We should be justified in portraying Maria as beautiful, even according to our own standards; for precisely in the Tzental country the traveler Stephens met a native girl of such "extraordinary beauty" that he makes emphatic note of it.[4]

The native sacred costumes described are archæolog-

[1] For instance, those of the modern Mayas given by the Abbé Brasseur in the introduction to his *Elements de la Langue Maya* (Paris, 1870); those obtained by Dr. Carl Sapper from the Kekchis of Guatemala (*Internat. Archiv für Ethnographie*, 1895); and those of the Quiches, published from manuscript sources in my work on *Nagualism* (Philadelphia, 1895). In spite of the cordial dislike entertained by the natives toward the Roman Church and its priests, its beautiful legends and its lessons of love were never entirely forgotton by them.

[2] Chap. II. Third Edition. Philadelphia, 1896.

[3] By divers writers the teachings of Quetzalcoatl have been assimulated to those of Christ; and Pachacuti claims that the oldest authentic accounts of Tunapa's doctrines showed them "almost the same" as the moral precepts of the Christian Church (*Tres Relaciones Peruanas*, p. 237).

[4] It was at the picturesque village of Yajalon. J. L. Stephens, *Travels in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*, vol. II., p. 265.

ically accurate as described by Sahagun and Palacios. The cuts illustrating the ordinary dress of the country are borrowed from Consul Haefken's "Centraal Amerika" (Dordrecht, 1832.).

§4. *The Mythology of the Ancient Tzentals,*

Very little information concerning the mythology of the Tzentals has been preserved. The still unpublished Mss. of the early missionary, Father Domingo de Ara (in my possession) and of Ordoñez y Aguiar supply a few but valuable particulars. The rare work of Nuñez de la Vega, Bishop of Chiápas in 1690, contains some hints; and a comparison with the well preserved Quiche mythology and that of the Mayas, both of whom were neighbors and kinsmen, furnish some suggestions. Mainly from these sources I present the following sketch.

The greatest of the gods, Father and Creator of all things visible, was called *Patól*, a name derived from the verbal root *pat*, to make, to mould or form. Associated with him as co-laborer, was the chief of goddesses, whose titles were *Alaghom Naom*, "Mother of Knowledge" (from *alaghib*, the womb, or, *alaghon*, to conceive; and *na*, knowledge); and *Iztat-Ix*, "the Woman of Wisdom" (the adjective, *iztat*, skilled, learned, wise, with the feminine suffix).

In this dual conception of the creative powers, therefore, it will be noted that the male element represents the material, the female element the immaterial and intellectual principle, as it did in Greek mythology (Pallas Athene, Psyche, etc.)

The gods who were principally associated with the

national legendary history bore the names of the days in the astrological calendar. The most celebrated was *Votán*, who by tradition, was the leader of their ancestors when they first came to Chiápas. Certain families claiming descent from him lived a century ago, and may yet, at Teopisca, a village eighteen miles southeast from San Cristóbal. The Votán myth has greatly exercised antiquaries and given occasion for the wildest speculation, as that he was identical with the Wodan of the Norsemen, etc.

One of his companions was *Been*, who is said to have parcelled out the land among the primitive immigrants, and to have marked their boundaries by erecting tall linestones, a number of which are still pointed out, and to this day are decorated by the Indians with flowers and wreaths.

To a third, *Cam*, is attributed the discovery of the ancient hieroglyphic writing, and a fourth, *Chinax*, was a famous warrior; while a fifth, *Cuculchan*, was remembered as a magician of extraordinary powers, which his name, meaning "The Feathered Serpent," mystically indicates.

The star-spangled nocturnal sky was referred to as "The Divine Serpent," *Chul Chan*; and the morning star was looked upon as its guardian spirit, whence its name, *Canan Chul Chan*, "guardian or keeper of the divine serpent." The Earth was assigned an analogous guardian deity, who bore a similar name, *Canan Lum*, who was supposed to appear at times in the form of a tiger.

A deity of wide fame was *Poxlón*, the teacher of magic

and medicine. He presided over the exorcisms by which the adepts sought to cure disease, and was supposed to appear in the shape of a ball of fire with flowing, fiery hair, like a comet or shooting star. His name means "the blower," and has reference to the forcible blowing of the breath, which was a prominent feature in the native shamanistic rites.

When these failed the patient, the God of Death appeared, whose ominous titles were *Pucugh*, "The Destroyer," and *Ilob cux*, "Who sucks out Life." He seized the soul and carried it to the underworld, *Calin bac*, "The Place of Imprisonment" (from *kal*, to shut up).

The god of war was *Ical Ahau*, "The Black Chieftain." His idol, which long remained an object of worship among the Tzentals, had a ferocious visage and was painted black. Bishop de la Vega discovered one behind the rafters of the church at Occhuc, in 1690.

The figure seated cross-legged on a tiger, which has been found at Ococingo, Palenque and elsewhere in Chiápas, and which some antiquaries have called a "Buddha," represents the deity which presided over certain cycles of days, months or years in the astrological calendar.

Numerous minor deities are referred to, a goddess of cacao, of maize, of the merchants, etc., and there were others of states of mind or habits, as *Pactayegh Chul*, god of lying, *Taghmai Chul*, god of jesting; and so of drunkenness, travelling, etc. The elements were personified and worshipped, and the hand was a sacred emblem. Nature was conceived to be perpetuated through the

reciprocal action of the male and female principles, as is manifest in the Quiche and Maya myths.

The principal symbolic animals were the tapir, the serpent, the bird and the tiger. Their exact significance has not yet been ascertained, though probably the tapir had some connection with sun-worship, the serpent with the sky and storms, the bird with the winds and the tiger with the earth.

§ 5. *The Secret Society of the Nagualists.*

According to one of the writers on this insurrection (Ordoñez), it had its origin in the machinations of the native secret society of the Nagualists.

This mysterious organization dated from before the conquest, and probably continues to the present day among the Indians of Mexico and Central America. It is a survival in part of the ancient priestly caste, blending the old pagan rites with modern Christian superstitions, and persistently hostile to the church and state introduced by the European invaders.

Its name is derived from the root *na*, knowledge, and has reference to the mystic or thaumaturgic knowledge which in primitive thought is synonymous with magical power. The *nagual* is the personal spirit, the *alter ego* or *daimon* of the individual. Through its aid the adept can practice sorcery, cause or cure disease, conjure demons, cast spells, forecast the future, and especially acquire the power of "shape-shifting," that is, transforming himself at will into some animal.

The organization of the society was well defined, consisting of acolytes, sub-priests, priests and high-priests.

The acolytes were taught in classes, and were obliged to undergo severe ordeals and initiations. It is especially noteworthy that not only were all these grades open to women, but in several well-known instances, these occupied the most responsible positions in the sodality.

The meetings of the initiates were held at night, either in some secluded forest dell or, when practicable, in caves. A number of such cave-temples have been described by writers. They contained the idols of the ancient gods, cups for burning incense (gum copal), votive offerings, etc. The religious rites solemnized included songs, dances, prayers and invocations addressed to the gods, to the four elements, to the sacred symbolic animals and to the reciprocal (generative) principles of nature. A number of such invocations have been preserved. They reveal a strange jumble of pagan and Christian religious notions, and are couched in a curious metaphorical jargon, unintelligible except to the initiated.

The fundamental tenet of Nagualism, as already said, was hatred of the Spanish civil and ecclesiastical rule, and the aim which kept it alive was the hope of destroying the white supremacy. One who has dispassionately studied the record of the treatment of the Indians by both the Church and the State in that land, will be forced to sympathize with the native population in this hope, and will be tempted to excuse even the utmost lengths to which it carried them. While now and then there was a righteous judge, or a priest inspired by truly Christian love, the majority were greedy, cruel and depraved. The influence they exerted brutalized and debased the native population, and made their lives one

long story of misery and injustice. This is fully acknowledged by some of the most enlightened modern writers on the subject, studying it on the spot.[1]

§ 6. *The Historians of the Insurrection.*

No satisfactory account of this insurrection has been published, and the materials from which to prepare one are not easily accessible.

An official report of the war and its results was drawn up in 1713 by President Cocío, and sent to Spain. One or more copies of it were retained in America and are apparently now in Mexico, as the historian Vicente Pineda quotes it frequently, and appears to base his history principally upon it.[2] I cannot learn that it has been printed.

Another contemporary account, by an eye-witness, is the report of Father Pedro Marselino Garcia. This is now in the library of Mr. H. H. Bancroft, and was exclusively followed by him in the chapter he devotes to this occurrence. He states that the manuscript is incomplete and not easily read.[3]

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[1] I mention especially the work of Don Francisco Pimentel, *Memoria sobre las Causas que han originado la Situacion actual de la Raza Indígena* (Mexico, 1864); and Apolinar Garcia y Garcia, *Historia de la Guerra de Castas de Yucatan* (Merida, 1865).

[2] *Informe del Excelentissimo Presidente de la Real Audiencia de Guatemala Don Toribio Cocío al Rey de España.* According to Beristain, a copy was in the library of the University of Mexico. *Biblioteca Hispano-Americana*, sub voce, "Cosio."

[3] *Informe sobre la Sublevacion de los Zendales.* See H. H. Bancroft, *The History of Central America*, Vol. II., p. 705.

An anonymous contemporary relation is mentioned by Mr. E. G. Squier as existing in the library of the Dominican monastery of Guatemala; I have not been able to learn further about it.[1]

Father Francisco Ximenes, a Dominican monk, who wrote a history of Chiápas about the year 1720, treated of the insurrection at length in the fourth volume of his work;[2] but this seems to have been lost.

In the latter part of the century (about 1780) Don Ramon de Ordoñez y Aguiar, who was a presbyter of the cathedral at San Cristóbal, wrote a curious work on the native myths.[3] It has never been printed, but I have examined a copy which is extant in the United States, and from it I have gleaned some interesting particulars about the heroine of the drama. He alone preserves her early name, "Candelaria."

The historian of Guatemala, Domingo Juarros, whose work was published in 1808, describes the circumstances of the revolt with brevity from official documents in the city of Guatemala;[4] and the archbishop Garcia Pelaez, in his historical collection issued in 1851, gives an interesting description of twenty-two paintings, executed by the

[1] *Relacion de la Sublevacion de los Zendales*, in E. G. Squier, *Monograph of Authors on the Languages of Central America*, p. 56.

[2] Francisco Ximenes, *Historia de la Provincia de San Vincente de Chiápas*. That it treated of the insurrection is stated by Garcia Pelaez, *Memorias Historicas*, Tom. II., p. 152.

[3] *Historia de la Creacion del Cielo y de la Tierra conforme al sistema de la Gentilidad Americana*, MS.

[4] *Compendio de la Historia de la Ciudad de Guatemala*. 2 vols.

order of President Cocío, illustrating various incidents of the war.[1]

Of the modern historians of Chiápas, Emetorio Pineda follows Juarros and adds nothing new;[2] while the more carefully prepared work of Vicente Pineda is claimed by the author to be based largely on traditions handed down orally since the revolt.[3] He also personally visited many of the scenes of the conflicts, which adds to the clearness of his narrative.

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[1] *Memorias para la Historia del antiguo Reyno de Guatemala.* 2 vols.

[2] *Descripcion Geografica de Chiápas y Soconusco.* Mexico, 1845.

[3] *Historia de las Sublevaciones Indigenas en Chiápas.* (Chiápas, 1888.)

THE ALCALDE.

JACINTO, THE MULETEER.

MARIA CANDELARIA.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Don Nicolas de Segovia, Commander of the Spanish Forces.

Father Simon de Lara, Cura of Cancuc.

Balthasar, a Sergeant of the Spanish Forces.

Sebastian Gomez, high priest of the Nagualists and maternal uncle of Maria.

Nicolas Vasquez, Commander of the insurgents.

Juan Garcia, a young man, afterwards Commander.

Antonio, a leader of the insurgents.

José, an old man.

Jacinto, a muleteer.

The Alcalde (Magistrate) of Cancuc.

Geronymo, a secret agent of the Spaniards.

} Indians of Cancuc and vicinity.

Maria Candelaria, a native girl of 20 years, niece of Sebastian Gomez, and priestess of the Nagualists.

Magdalena Diaz, paternal aunt of Maria.

Spanish Soldiers, Indian Warriors, Villagers, Acolytes of the Nagualists.

Place: In and near the Indian village of Cancuc, in the province of Chiápas, Mexico.

Time: November, 1712.

MARIA CANDELARIA.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *The Plaza of Cancuc. José, Jacinto, Geronymo, the Alcalde.*

José. What news, what news, Jacinto?

Jacinto. Good news, José, the best of news. "No more priests and no more taxes, no king and no laws." So says she, our hamlet's pride and glory.

José. Aye, Jacinto, so she says. But can we trust a woman, and a young one at that, scarce past her first communion? Why, man, I knew her father well, dead, God rest his soul, long since.

Jacinto. Must every one be an idiot whose father you knew? I come in there, so have a care. But here comes Geronymo, as full of news, I warrant, as an egg of meat, and as very an ass withal, as if you had known both his father and mother. Ho! Geronymo, what news?

Geronymo. Oh! wonders! I kiss my hands

to you both. But you know all my news. You know all about the revolt and the murders.

Jacinto. Nay, I have been with my mules in the mountains for six weeks.

José. And I in my maize field since the second planting month.

Geronymo. Yes, true, you are like the other poor fools of Indians who can never think or dream of anything higher than a corn-stalk. Well, you know that our little Maria of Cancuc saw the blessed Maria, down by the stream in the seeding month, and that by her command we built a chapel on the very spot, and that Father Simon, when he heard of it, though Maria told him as straight a story as the Credo itself, ordered us to tear it down, and you know that we took good care not to do anything of the kind.

José and Jacinto. Oh, yes! We know this.

Geronymo. You do? Well, I'll tell you something you don't know. Why did the Father want the chapel torn down? Ah! that's a secret. But I'll tell you. Because old Sebastian Gomez, Maria's uncle, prayed queer prayers. They began to the Blessed Virgin

and ended to the Holy Tapir! from God to dog, wasn't it? Then some sneaking spy told of the twelve apostles sent to the thirty-two villages of our language, as well as to the Chols and Quelens. The priests want to keep the preaching business for themselves, so down must come the chapel and old Gomez would have been in the parish prison with a chance for the gallows, when, bang! came that ugly business at Chilun—three Padres murdered at the altar and the white women and children ripped up on the church floor; you heard about that, on Trinity Sunday?

José. An ugly business, as you say. Pray Santiago we do not pay dearly for it. (*Enter the Alcalde.*) Señor Alcalde, what think you of it?

Alcalde. I am an important person, Alcalde of Cancuc. I give no hasty opinion on any subject.

Jacinto. It was not half so bad as they treated our forefathers.

Geronymo. Good or bad, Father Simon took to his heels for San Cristóbal. They say he is now coming back with Don Nicolas de Segovia and a thousand muskets behind him.

José and *Jacinto.* Holy Jesu! A thousand muskets?

Geronymo. Yes, indeed. And one bigger round than the trunk of a ceiba tree, the very mother of muskets, made by Father Montoya, a famed magician. It can throw red hot balls as big as your head for two leagues and never miss. There will be a fine chance for us then, won't there?

Jacinto. Terrible, terrible. But our brave leader Vasquez has ten thousand warriors, and he will drive the whites into the ocean whence they came. Is that not so, Alcalde?

Alcalde. This is a leading question; I will consider it.

Geronymo. Vasquez? ah, Vasquez. Great warrior! Fine general! But hold! I see you have not heard about him. He attacked the commander Don Francisco Monge at Huistlán. Don Nicolas de Segovia hastened there with two hundred muskets and with the image of the Virgin of La Caridad. She was mightier than the nagual of Vasquez. His eagle was floating in the air and Don Nicolas shot it with his arquebus. A hundred or more of our

poor Indians were left on the field and Vasquez ran away. But the magicos say he has not long to live. His nagual is dead.

José. Alas! And who could take his place?

Geronymo. You may well ask. No one.

Jacinto. Indeed there is. One from our own town. You all know him. A youth full of courage and strength, devoted to our cause—Juan Garcia.

Geronymo. Garcia! Juan Garcia! Why, man, he is a mestizo. In his veins runs the accursed blood of Spain.

Jacinto. Nay, not a mestizo, at most a coyote; and not a beat of his heart that is for priests or kings.

José. Juan Garcia! Yes. A proper boy; but pshaw! What is he for a general? Why, I knew his father and his grandfather!

[*Exeunt all but the Alcalde.*]

The Alcalde. (*Alone.*) Now by the blessed saints,—or by our ancient gods,—
For faith, the times are such I know not which to say,—
Was ever so perplexed a leading man like me?

Conscientious doubts may worry lesser minds,
But we, the statesmen born and diplomats astute,
Are tethered to no tenets, but with a sense acute
Of where our interest lies, we shrewdly look around,
And on the winning side will generally be found.

SCENE II. *In the house of Magdalena Diaz, in Cancuc.*

SEBASTIAN GOMEZ *in ordinary dress.* (*Shirt open at the neck, short embroidered jacket, wide sash, knee breeches.*)

NICOLAS VASQUEZ, *in Spanish half-armor, with a short sword.*

MAGDALENA, *dressed as a Creole married woman, short skirt, low necked chemise and mantilla.*

Later MARIA, *in native costume.* (*A short blue skirt, white chemisette, embroidered short silk jacket, bare head, hair braided, falling down the back.*

Gomez. It matters little 'gainst the general aim
That we have lost the fight at Huistlán.
It should but nerve us to more bloody deeds,
So to avenge the friends that there were slain.
I tell you, Vasquez, for the hundredth time,
That any mercy toward the whites we show
Is utmost folly, fatal to our cause.
We must decide to crush them wholly out,
To hunt them down as were they ven'mous snakes,
And drive the remnant back across the sea.
Their priests who used to whip us to the mass,
We'll beat to death with their own crucifix,

To prove our gods are mightier than their Christ.
The selfish planters who have ground us down
With endless tasks, then robbed us of our pay,
We'll tie to stakes, and flog until they drop.
Nor shall their women 'scape our just revenge;
Their cries and groans shall not avert our knives,
Nor yet the tender wail of infancy
Wake in our hearts a merciful response.
For twice a century's years we've mildly borne
The heartless grinding of the despot heel,
Our daughters outraged, and our sons enslaved,
Our foreheads branded, and our backs a-bleed;
And he who grumbled, straight was sped away
To die in mines or at the galley's oar.
Think of this, Vasquez, when your mood grows mild.

Vasquez. I quail not, Gomez, at the Spanish arms;
Nor care I, Gomez, how the priests may curse;
There's blood upon my sword from Spanish hearts;
But true it is, I turned my face away,
When I saw infants brained against the trees.
When I drink blood, I like it from a man,

Not from a babe or girl ;—but, leaving that,
How shall we mend our fall at Huistlán?
Our tribes are frightened, and they tremble sore
Lest once again our strength shall be subdued,
And bitterer than before our bonds shall be.

Gomez. I swear you, Vasquez, this time we shall win ;
Have I not read it in the mystic book,
Our people's book, which tells what is to come,
Limning it forth in picture and in glyph,
Framed by the prophets of our glorious eld?
They saw it in the curls of circling smoke,
The primal water showed it in its depth ;
The gleaming crystal painted it in hues ;
The sacred herbs revealed it to their dreams ;
More than all this—for people now care most
For what is present, rather than the past,—
Has not my niece, Maria, as you know,
Foretold the same, inspired by ancient gods,
Gods of our tribe, whose names are not forgot
By us who constitute the sacred guild,
And keep alive the fires within the caves?

Magdalena. I like not, uncle, thus to see you put
Unwavering credence in that girl's vagaries.

I hold her quite as dear as you—but yet,
I doubt a girl's a prophet when in love,
Or else they'd never make such sorry choice,
And never be the fools they often are;
And so I think Maria's—

Gomez. (*Alarmed.*) Maria's what?

Mag. Too much in love to live among the gods,
When handsome Juan Garcia is in sight.

Gomez. My God! If that is so, then all is lost.
Her power among the tribe is wholly gone,
If she descends below Queen Mary's height,
Or yields admission to a carnal thought.
But stay! If this is so, how can it be
That I have not perceived it of myself?

Mag. What recks an old man of the shafts of love?
He sees them not because he feels them not;
I tell you that I know whereof I speak.

Vasquez. Let me a word on this occasion say
Which surely I believe will cure the doubt.
Oft have I heard Maria stir the hearts
Of all our tribe with forceful, fiery speech,

Hurl withering curses on the Spanish fry,
And wake the dullest to determined deed.
Filled full she surely is of godlike power,
Of desperate resolve and dire intent;
Nor can I credit that a mortal man,
Be he the handsomest of all our tribe,
Could cast a shadow o'er her maiden soul.
Call her before us—she stands just without—
And straightly question her concerning him.

Mag. (*Calling Maria.*) Come within.

Maria. (*Enters in a trance-like state.*)
What will you with me?
Call me not lightly, for I seem to hear
The shouts of warriors in the upper air,
Wild songs of triumph over white-faced foes,
Chanting the death notes of the Spanish power,
Singing the advent of our ancient rule,
Our gods returning and our people free.
The vision pales before me; O my friends,
Leave me a little, lest it scape my eyes.

Mag. Such pretty dreamful moments, my dear niece,
Were sweet and proper in their fitting time;
But these have serious matters for you here.
They think you dream of quite material things

As well as visions in the upper air;
For instance, Juan Garcia's handsome eyes.

Maria. Juan Garcia? (*Sinks into a chair.*)

Mag. Yes, Juan Garcia; and it seems
His name has brought a fullness to your eyes,
A color to your cheek, a heaving to your breast,
Which show right strange in so divine a girl.
I guessed your virgin visions were less prim
Than cloistered sisters in a nunnery dream.

Gomez. O speak, my child, my precious acolyte.
Thou whom I taught the ancient holy rites,
Who learned the sacred numbers and their counts,
The herbs that carry with them life and death,
The magic words that change the man to beast,
The deepest secrets of the Nagual lore!
Hast thou allowed the ferment of the blood
To darken with its fumes thy limpid soul?

Vasquez. O woe! If this be so, what faith,
What faith were left among our warlike youth,
Who follow now unquestioning thy commands,—
Because they hold thee free as Holy May
From every touch and taint of fleshly thirst,

Should they discover that their seeming saint
Longs for the luxury of the carnal clasp?

Maria. (*Coming forward.*) You, worthy
uncle, and you, valiant chieftain,
(For to my bitter aunt I do not speak),
You wrong me deeply both in thought and
word.
I have no shameful fervors to conceal,
No thought to hide, no act to cover o'er.
As they believe me, so I am in sooth,
One who is chosen by our ancient gods
To speak their will, to order forth our braves,
And drive the cursed Christians from our land.
Yet am I still a mortal and a maid;
Oft when a child, Juan and I went forth
To gather berries on the upland slope,
Or carry water from the valley spring;
And thus our budding souls did melt in one.
With ripening years I held him more aloof;
For early in my life I felt a hand,
Unseen of others, drawing me along,
With whispers of strange voices in my ears,
Foretelling of a fate in store for me,
Of mightier moment than all else besides.
I love Juan, and yet I know that he
Has not yet breathed the higher air with me;

Has not yet learned a maiden's richest love
Reaches out ever for a loftier soul.
Yet this, I know, is but a fault of sense,
And he, like me, will sink all lower aims
To that supreme which is my life of lives—
To answer with my life to *Freedom's* call.—
So have no fear; I am the gods' elect,
Through love and hate I walk as they direct.

[*Exit Maria.*]

Vasquez. A matchless maid! By all the gods I swear,
That never more a doubt will I admit
That they have chosen her to rule our cause.

Gomez. And I too, Vasquez, see that in her soul
Lies more than mortal, some miraculous power;
Yet none the less, it hurts me like a blow
That any love her highest love divides.

Magdalena. To hear you talk just makes me tired of men.
When e'er a girl's the theme, how little wit
The wisest of your sex do ever show.

[*They motion her to be silent, and, as she continues, they leave the room.*]

Let pretty lips the wildest fustian prate,

Down it is gulped as the decrees of fate ;—
Oh ! you are going ; well then, get you gone,
You'll find yourselves well fooled when all is done.

SCENE III. *The Spanish camp near Occhuc. Don Nicolas de Segovia, Father Simon de Lara. Later, Balthasar, Geronymo.*

Don Nicolas de Segovia. Your Reverence, I have it from a spy
That Vasquez and his force have fallen back,
And left the road to Cancuc freely ours.
That town itself is walled, and trenched without,
And there they mean to make the final stand;
And it is well, for from that pestilent spot—
Return so thankless for your pious care—
Have come the veriest hell-hounds of this war,
Their leader Vasquez, who shall pay it dear,
The devil's spawn, old Gomez, fit for fuel,
And his blasphemous niece, who soils the name
Of our most blessed Lady of the Candles.

Father Simon. The devil works his will with these,
And fills them with unheard-of evil thoughts.
They have defiled the holy fanes of God—
My own is changed into a dancing hall,
Where wanton movement and lascivious song
Are heard, instead of solemn prayer and chant;—
The sacred cup which held the blood of Christ,

The salver bearing His divinest flesh,
Are turned to every base, ignoble use,
Or hid and buried in the common dirt;
The sacred vestments we anointed wear
When we approach the holy throne of grace,
Are pieced and cut and travestied to make
A flaunting costume for an Indian wench.

Don Nic. No mercy to such miscreants is due;
Hating to work, incapable in sense
To see and seek the nobler ends of life,
Content to wallow in their heathen mire,
And in it cast the pearls of price we bring,
Their only place is that of hinds and serfs,
Who 'neath the lash perforce obey commands,
Which we, the higher and the stronger race,
Must still enforce, if needs, with scourge and sword.

Father Simon. Horrors on horrors ever fresh are heaped;
For not content with stoning to the death,
The pious brethren, Marcos and Jorgé,
And slaying Mariscál and Torres in the road,
And Gomez and Malindres, godly priests,
And humble followers of Saint Dominic;
Now from Simijóvel comes the news

That Father Campos' dying blood has wet
The very shrine and altar of the Lord ;
At Tonalá, the crown of martyrdom
By Father de Andrada has been won;
Both our blest rivals in the holy work,
Followers of Francis, the seraphic saint.

[*Enter Balthasar.*]

Balthasar. My General and your Reverence, here without
The treacherous Indian stands who brought us news
Of how Cancuc is guarded. Now he says
A secret path he knows, will lead us straight
To where the walls are weak, and where a gate
Will softly open by a woman's hand, and where
Our men-at-arms can pass ere sun is up,
And seize each point of vantage in the place.
Shall I the knave admit?

Don Nicolas. Admit him straight.

(*Balthasar whistles and Geronymo enters.*)

Don Nicolas (*to Geronymo*). Liar and traitor as I know you are,
If in this guidance you have promised us,
You swerve but the dividing of a hair,
Your head shall fall ere you can ope your mouth

To shape the words to any further lie.
At my right hand and at my sword's keen edge
You will point out the path of which you spoke.
But if a true and loyal servant you,
Then gold is yours, and freedom, and reward.

Geronymo (*kneeling*). I swear to you, O brave General, and to you, Reverend Father, by the most Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, that I love the whites and the padres, and hate heretics and idolators and all enemies to the King and the bishops. Let my head answer for my fidelity.

Don Nicolas. A double traitor may you be,
A perjuring villain, who would lead my men
By night and ignorance into lonely paths,
To fall weak victims to an ambushed horde.
A proof I order that your heart is ours.

Geronymo. Most ready am I, valiant General,
To offer any proof that you can ask.

Don Nicolas. I know your people well,
A crew of ignorant and drunken serfs,
Led on by some few servants of the devil.
Just now, the fiend's favorite is that Vasquez;

He is the leader of the mob, and he
Will surely meet with a peremptory death
When we shall take him captive in Cancuc.
We Christians are, however, merciful,
And would save slaughter; his poor fools,
Their leader lost, would yield themselves at once;
And thus our swords would rest within their sheaths,
A general pardon be proclaimed and peace.
Now you can bring about this happy end.

Geronymo. By what means, General, can this end be gained?

Don Nicolas. Easily enough; as, we'll say, this eve,
Slip into Cancuc, and tell Vasquez there,
You have a mighty matter to impart
To him alone;—alone with him,
Plunge deep this dagger in his traitrous heart.
(*Hands him a poniard.*)
And then to prove the deed is done,
Snatch from his neck the jade he wears,
His famous amulet, and fetch it here.

Geronymo. Ere the moon rises at the midnight hour,
The carvéd jade shall glimmer in your hand.

Don Nicolas. See that your actions to your words be true,
Or soon you'll find 'twill be the worse for you.

[*Exeunt all but Geronymo.*]

Geronymo. Now must I finally decide my course:—
Or with the damnéd Spaniard to abide,—
Who will, for sure, reward my treachery well—
Or with my native kinsmen take my chance.
This last is that which I should rather choose
Had I strong hope their cause would win success—
But I have none—there's Magdalena too,
The woman whom I love, and she loves not
Her upstart niece, who overrules us all
With a rod rougher than a Spanish scourge.
Vasquez suspects me not, and easily he
Will see me secretly, and thus give chance
To save my kin and serve the Spaniard too,
By letting his red blood with this steel blue.

SCENE IV. *The cave-temple of the Nagualists in the wall of the barranca of Cancuc. Around the sides are images of the native gods; before them, small altars, on which are lighted candles, jars of maize, flat dishes for burning incense, parchments inscribed in bright colors with the native hieroglyphic writing, the national flags or banners, wooden drums, conch shells used as trumpets, and marimbas.*

SEBASTIAN GOMEZ, *in the full costume of a High Priest of the Nagualists: a blue tunic with short sleeves, reaching to his feet, decorated down the front with a double row of hieroglyphic characters in yellow; a diadem of gold on his head, surmounted with a cluster of green quetzal feathers; in his hand a long crooked staff, like a bishop's crozier.*

MARIA, *in the full costume of a High Priestess of the Nagualists: a white tunic cut low in the neck, embroidered in gold above the waist with hieroglyphs; around her waist a broad red sash falling to the feet, embroidered with figures in blue; a necklace of alternate gold and jade images encircles her neck and rests on her bosom; her hair is loose and flowing, retained by a circlet of gold surmounted by red and white feathers.*

The Acolytes are variously clothed in the four symbolic colors, black, red, green and yellow.

Gomez. Ye gods who guided in the ancient days

Our fathers from afar to these their homes !
I call for help in this distressful hour.
On thee, Votán, I call, who named the tribes
And gave their varied language unto men ;
And thee, O mighty Ben, whose lofty pillars set
Their metes and bounds to each ; and thee,
O Cam,
Who taught the sacred writing to the wise ;
And you, ye holy souls,
Who greet the rising and the setting sun,
Ye spirits of the mountain and the plains,
Of frost and sunshine, wind and rain ;
And most and first of all, I call upon Patól,
Moulder of man and builder of the world ;
Nor yet forget I you, strange gods, who fought,
And still do fight against the creed we hate,
You, Judas, Satan, Antichrist ;
Aid us with all your might ;
Send death to those we hate, a blight upon
their crops,
A murrain on their herds, defeat unto their
arms.

Maria. O thou mother of our kind.
Goddess of knowledge and of skill,
Whom men call Wisdom's Womb and Rea-
son's Queen,

To me a loving mother and a sweet;
Who chose me from among the many maids,
And shone upon me in thy living form
That blood-red dawn when forth I fared
To gather garlands in the dewy glen;
And first, I thought thee mother of the Christ,
The Virgin Mother whom the padres brought;
But soon thy looks and words proclaimed thee more,
Much more and mightier than the Jewish maid;
For she was but a girl, a goddess thou,
Who told me I, e'en I, should wield
As grand a scepter as the King of Spain.
And so it is, for now, the strong-armed guards,
The slingers from the upper hills,
The fishers from the lower streams,
All come and bow before me, write my sign
Upon their banners, and by thousands strong,
Go forth to offer battle in my name.
At first thy wisdom taught me to pretend,
To leave both priest and people still to think
The Holy Virgin of the whites had come
And pointed out a place for both to pray;
But now I have thrown off such masquerade;
Myself do celebrate the holy mass,
To prove that thou art strong as any god.

And I myself do drain the sacred cup,
And break the crumbling body of the Lord,
So all may see that naught can do me harm
Dost thou support me with thy mighty hand.
For reason, knowledge, wisdom, ever win,
And thou art queen and mistress of them all.

First dance of the Acolytes; after which they sing the Song to the Elemental Forces.
Chorus of Boys (*To Fire*).

Spirit with the yellow hair,
Shining rose of night,
Father thou of all things here,
In darkness and in light.

Chorus of Girls (*To Water*).

Spirit of the azure plain,
With thy skirt of gems,
Thou who sowest by thy rain
The flowers, earth's diadems.

Chorus of Boys (*To the Winds*).

Birds unseen, from north and south,
East and west ye come,
Seasons bringing, flood and drouth,
Heat or blasts that numb.

Chorus of Girls (*To the Earth*).

Flower the womb of every flower,
Bearing all that is,
Thy children eating hour by hour,
Killing with thy kiss.

Boys and Girls together (*To the Hand*).

Fates that frame the luck of man,
Five ye be in all,
Guide our master in his plan,
Let fortune him befall.

Second dance of the Acolytes, after which they sing the Song to the Reciprocal Principles of Nature.

Brides and grooms immortal, guardians of the portal
Through which Nature winds her endless chains;
By whose mystic unions, and whose deep communions;
Death is foiled and Life forever reigns;

You whose bliss eternal, in the realms supernal,
Mortal lovers may not hope to share,
Yet a taste bestowing, in the fervid, glowing
Love that loving lovers to each other bear;

Hear this man and maiden, bending heavy laden
Neath the signs of blood and burnings nigh;
Kneeling low before you, weeping they implore you:
Heed their moans and harken to their cry.

Third Dance of the Acolytes, after which they arrange themselves behind Gomez and Maria, who approach altars at opposite sides of the stage.

Gomez. (*Holding the serpent wand. Invocation to the constructive male potencies.*)

To the sacred three and the three times three,
The gods who have builded whatever there be;
To the fount of life neath the primal tree,
And the fourfold streams which flow from it free;
I burn the gum, and I pour the wine (*burns copal and pours a libation*),
I scatter what's beaten nine times nine (*scatters tobacco*),
I utter the words of power divine,
I pray that their aid may ever be mine.

Maria. (*Holding an aspergillum. Invocation to the destructive female potencies.*)

To the mother of all, on whose fateful shrine,

The cradle and grave their symbols entwine;
To the eagle-wraith whose scent from afar
Feeds on the fumes of the fields of war;
To the serpent-queen, whose poisonous breath
Hissingly utters the summons to death;
To the spectre-maids, with flying locks,
Who will rend the earth with its final shocks;
To the lethal queens of the unseen world,
I scatter the drops on the scroll unfurled (*asperges the parchments*),
On its mystic glyphs and its figures old,
And I conjure success for our warriors bold.

Solemn procession of the Acolytes, who then leave the stage.

Gomez. Now that our ancient gods have been adjured
To lend their favor to our bold emprise,
We must ourselves leave nothing overlooked
To fetter fortune wholly to our flag;
And as when one would clear a path of weeds,
He cuts those first that tangle his own feet,
I ask you straightly, niece, if in your heart
Another thought than that of battling lies?

Maria. I wonder not to hear you thus inquire,
For well I know that Magdalena's words

Have left a rankling fear within your breast
That I for love of Garcia might desert
The holy cause on which we've staked our lives.
Well too, I know, that Juan Garcia's heart
Burns more for me than for our sacred aims;
And this it is that makes me passing sad;
For I am not of those who wish a love
Fed with the flesh of animal desire,
But one, and one alone, which finds its food
In sharing noble thoughts and planning deeds
Which shall outshine the common aims of life.
I sent for Juan Garcia here to-night,
And he must choose to rise above himself
And reach the upper levels of my soul,—
Or else the end has come to both our loves.
Hist! Let us apart, for surely I believe,
I hear his footfall on the woodland path.

[*Exeunt Gomez and Maria.*]

Enter Juan Garcia.

Juan. (*Alone.*) 'Tis she! No! 'tis but the flutter of a bird.
Ah! Were it she, I'd know it from afar:—
The quickened flushing of my blood,
The keen, small darts transfixing all my frame,
The sudden grasping of my throat,

The throbbing brain and quivering thews
Which her approaching footfalls wake in me,
Would tell me it is she, my life, my love !
For as the heavy odor of the flower
Dulls in full flight the laboring bee,
And as the forked serpent of the cloud
Breaks through and burns the mighty forest bole,
So dulls, so breaks, so burns my love for her
All strength and thought and might within my breast.
Her breath is fiery and her touch a flame,
And e'en her little finger laid on mine
Makes weak the warrior sinews of mine arm,
Fainting with fierceness of intense desire.
But in my nightly dreams I am her mate,
And strong and potent clasp her in my arms.
Then all her rounded body clings to mine,
And she it is who gasps and faints and reels,
Breathing at every pore the amorous dew,
The sweet aroma of enraptured sense,
Which maddens, and by maddening heals.
Ah ! Then indeed, our twin souls melt to one ;
I suck sweet savor from her ripening fruit,
And fill with kisses all her roseate bowls,
And each soft limb is interwreathed in mine.

Maria, (*enters*). Juan, I am here.

Juan, (*hastens toward her*). Maria!

Maria, (*motioning him to stop*). Nay, Juan, come not near.

Scarce can you think, my love, that on this spot,
At such an hour, we meet for amorous play.
The circlet crowns my brow, my shoulders bear
The flowing garments of the Nagual queen;
And here besides us, mark the sacred shrines
Bearing upon them mighty gods of men.
The words I have to speak befit this scene,
This scene, so far from sensuous dalliance set.
I know you love me, Juan, and I you.
My love for you—oh!—who could give it words?
A love beginning with my life itself!
Yet ever felt I there was something else,
Aye! holier, deeper than my love to you,
Not driving it away, but urging me beyond.
As in that stream which flows toward Balancán
From out our eastern borders, all that drops,
Be it a tree or leaf, or dead man's corpse,
Is turned to stone and sinks as flinty rock;
So in my heart, the sweeter, milder thoughts
Have been transformed to stony, stern resolves,
Until the flag of *freedom* crowns our land.

This was it, Juan, made me seem so cold,
This is it, Juan, makes me now pronounce
The words which wither all my hopes of love,
Unless they wake in you responsive chords,
Will lead us hand in hand to glorious life.
I know your noble and impetuous heart
Throbs for the freedom of the Indian race.
On this revolt you know I've staked my life
And lives of thousands of our tribe and tongue.
When we have won, Juan, then you and I,
A king and queen, will found a famous house,
Ruling with justice all our ancient land.
Promise me here, and on your soul of souls,
Forgetting all desire, to aid in this,
And push straight onward to this noble goal;
Or, if you cannot, if the path is steep,
Too steep for you to mount—then leave me here;
For he who loves me, must love better still
The cause for which I sacrifice his love.

Juan. Thy words, Maria, pierce me through and through;
But slaying only those unworthy parts
Which hitherto have made me unfit thee.
A light illumes my soul, I see thee now
A queen of men, an angel of the gods,

And yet withal, a woman sweet and true,
Uplifting and ennobling whom she loves,
Cleansing his soul to fit it for her own.
Doubt me no longer; I am all that thou
Didst ever fondly wish that I should be.
As in that mountain-cleft near Comitán,
The crystal water twixt the narrow walls
Draws all above it with such potent force,
That stalwart slingers strive in vain to hurl
Their polished stones athwart its easy breadth,
For straight they plunge beneath its unplumbed waves:
So does thy lofty and sublime appeal
Constrain my every thought to flow to thee,
And in thy service mine own self to drown.
Tell me thou lovest; give me once again
This soothing potion for my bitter pain.

Maria. I cannot measure the abounding joy
Which floods my soul to find thee as thou art.
Be certain, Juan, that no maiden's love
In any record reaches up to mine;
Be sure of this; though not for many days
May I reveal it by a word or look.
As in the tender spring the quetzal bird
Fills with his forceful song the shady glade,
And then is heard no more throughout the year

Till springtime brings again the bud and blade;
So trust with fullest faith, my dearest dear,
That though awhile I speak no word of love,
The time will come when I shall draw anear
And sing my sweetest songs thy heart to move.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *House of Magdalena. Magdalena, later Geronymo, Juan Garcia.*

Magdalena (*alone*). That I should live to see myself spit upon by my own niece! For it might as well have been that, when she stopped me in the midst of my prophecy, and bade me hold my tongue! As if I could not prophesy better than she! Minx! But my turn will come. I can make her and the whole of them, not only sweat but fry, if I choose; and that right easily with Geronymo's aid. And with the word, here he comes.

[*Enter Geronymo.*]

Geronymo. Hist! Are we alone?

Mag. Indeed we are. Every soul has gone to hear Maria's gabble at the new church. When I wanted to say a word she up and told me to shut my mouth. What think you of that for conduct?

Geronymo. Scandalous. But it gives us a chance, ducky, to talk over our plans. In brief, Don Nicolas and Father Simon promise

me and you pardon and money, if I guide them at night to the weak corner of the wall. You are to be there, and when I give the wood-owl screech, you are to slip the bolt and open the gate.

Mag. And will they spare the people?

Ger. No one will be hurt who does not oppose them. All, said Father Simon, will be pardoned; except, indeed, Vasquez, who is charged with murdering babies and women at Chilun.

Mag. And my niece, and uncle Gomez?

Ger. (*hesitates*). Oh! About them, Father Simon was not sure. The soldiers will not hurt them, but, you see, the Church—well, they stand accused of witchcraft and idolatry and sacrilege—and with them it may go a little hard.

Mag. Well, faith, why should I care? They must look out for themselves. But they will kill Vasquez?

Geron. (*approaching her.*) Unless I kill him first! Don Nicolas requires this of me as proof of loyalty. 'Tis but to shorten his life a day or two, for die he must, and that soon. Nor do I shun the task; for he has ever treated me with insolence.

Mag. And me with disdain. I'll waste no tears on him.

Geron. But to insure success we need another hand. A sentry guards that gate, and we must have a sturdy fellow to grasp his throat behind, and choke his calls. I have the man in mind—partly a pale face, weak, therefore, to the native cause. What is more, lovesmitten with Maria, and scorned by her. You know him now?

Mag. Yes, Juan Garcia, a dreamy youth who never seemed to have the cause at heart.

Geron. I have asked him to come here that we might show him where his interest lies. And here he is.

[*Enter Juan Garcia.*]

Juan. My friends, I hasten here at your request, though full of work to do. What is it you wish?

Mag. Lord, Juan, how you talk! You'll spoil your comely hands, if you do work. And you with white blood in your veins, to talk of working! Why, man, more money's to be made by working not at all. I'll tell you how.

Geron. Hush! Magdalena, not so fast.

You know, good Juan, that our troops were beaten back at Huistlán, and now have left Occhuc without a blow. Our general Vasquez is or weak or traitrous. Moreover, 'tis he the Spaniards chiefly blame. Were he—put away (*draws his hand across his throat*)—winning or losing, we'd be the better off. What think you?

Juan (*cautiously*). What you say sounds fairly—but, after that, what next? Your project surely ends not there. And who can do the deed?

Geron (*encouraged*). I see, Juan, you're quarter white, and always all a Christian. You, like me, laugh at the black cave-gods and their impotent spells. You are no Indian dolt, nor yet am I. You and I in three days can be free and rich and pardoned, if you will.

Juan. And how?

Geron. To-morrow night you go with Magdalena to the northwest gate, which opens on the ancient, disused road. Only one sentinel keeps watch there. Engage him in negligent talk, and at a propitious moment seize him by the throat with those strong hands

of yours. When you hear a wood-owl's screech, Magdalena will unbar the gate, and—and—

Juan. Well, what then?

Geron. Why, then, I and some Spanish soldiers will slip in.

Juan. And think you Vasquez sleeps all night?

Geron. Ere that hour comes, he'll sleep to wake no more. Look you here (*shows the dagger*), with this royal lancet I'll let his blood this eve.

Juan (*rising and pacing in thought*) (*aside*). I must estop this devilish plot. My stronger arm can wrest the dagger from him now and drive it to his heart. But, no; a public vengeance should on him alight, where all may know the cause. (*To Geron.*) This eve you say? You've planned it well. But let me think it over, and on the plaza when the sun goes down, we'll settle it between us.

[*Exit Juan.*]

Geron. (*To Magdalena*). By the Holy Grandmother of God, Magdalena, he falls as easily into our hands as a ripe zapote when

one shakes the tree. That shows what faithless currents run in white men's veins.

Mag. Are you sure of him? To me he seemed not over warm.

Geron. Is there any warmth in a white man's blood when he is after gold? The only way to warm them is to melt it and pour it down their accursed throats, as our ancestors did. But Juan is ours.

SCENE II. *The Plaza of Cancuc. Late afternoon. Jacinto, José; later Sebastian Gomez, in the ordinary costume of a Nagual Priest; a long white tunic, perfectly plain, fastened at the waist; on his head a narrow circlet of gold.*

MARIA, *in the symbolic garb of the "serpent-woman;" a white tunic, edged and slashed with black; a pointed red piece set in at the neck; her hair plaited, the plaits crossing her forehead like the coils of a serpent, upon them a crown of gold, bearing short red feathers; around her neck a live serpent; on her breast, hung low, a large plaque of gold inscribed with mystic characters; her sash of white, edged and slashed with black; in her hand the "serpent wand."*

Jacinto. They're coming this way, José. Stand we here aside, and we can see the Virgin Queen and all her grand array.

José. They say she chants a mass as well as Father Simon, and beats him quite in sermons in our Tzental tongue.

Jacinto. Why, so I've heard. Perhaps she'll give one here.

[*Enter the procession, headed by Gomez, Vasquez and Maria, followed by acolytes, slingers, warriors, populace and children.*]

Song by the Acolytes.

The eagle is soaring,
Libations we're pouring,
Our lances we're lowering,
In battle array.

Why stand ye a-wringing
Your hands, when our singing
Should spur you to flinging
Yourselves in the fray?

Why sit ye a-sighing,
Or listlessly lying,
When heroes are dying?
Up! up! and away.

Gomez (*to Maria*). Pause we here awhile,
For I note wondering faces in the crowd
Not lately to be seen in our assembly,
And we must catch them while they are in reach.
My fellow townsmen, and you distant tribesmen,
Our hearts are movéd by one single purpose—
To claim our ancient rights, and make them valid
'Gainst those accursed tyrants and oppressors,

Who, some two centuries since, despoiled our parents.
They spurned our chieftains and with stony hearts,
Pierced them with swords while kneeling in respect.
Our youths they sold as slaves to distant islands;
Our maids they soiled as common concubines,
And, if a father dared to make complaint—
"Dog of an Indian! Get you from our sight,"
Was the reply, with taunt and bitter blows.
They seized our goods and called it levying tax,
And often robbed us of our growing crops;
Starving our babes that they might fatten swine.
Our bodies thus abased, they boast the more
That they have brought the Church of Christ to us,
And saved our souls through priestly ministrants.
Believe them not, for well you know yourselves,
What fine examples these same padres set;—
Drunkards and gamblers, lecherous and lazy;
Debauching matrons and despoiling homes,
Greedy for gold, and oft imposing penance
To make the frightened sinner buy it off!
Suggesting sinful thoughts to innocent minds

Under pretence of guarding purity;
Ruling like despots by the threat of hell,
And endless torment to the timid souls.
Away, I say, away with cowardly fears!
Avenge the wrongs that ye have borne so long!
Slay every white-faced creature of them all!
Let neither youth nor age nor sex escape.
Death and destruction to their entire tribe!
Sweep their accursed spawn from off the earth,
And thus regain your ancient joyous life,
The noble grandeur of our earlier state,
When mighty Ococingo ruled the mount,
And Comocalco guarded by the shore,
And midway rose Nachan in sculptured pomp;
While all the way from there to Tenosek,
The land was whitened with a hundred towns,
Whose stones now litter the tenebrious woods.
Be ye but men, those days will dawn again,
And we be masters on our natal soil.

Villagers. Lead us afield; we'll massacre them all!

Vasquez. Stand firmly by your banners and be men.

Success and victory await our arms;
For have we not here present to our sight
The gods' own messenger unparagoned,

Their secret council's chosen oracle,
The virgin priestess of the sacred cave ;
Harken the prophecy that she will speak.

Maria. (*Speaks in a trance*).

The cycle is ending, the lord of it leaves
His house in the east for the love of the land
Which groans in the grasp of the god of the whites,
And bleeds from the teeth of their merciless band.
A blight is advancing, the leaves shrivel up,
A cloud is arising, a storm draweth near ;
Up, men of our nation, lay hold of your blades.
Reach out for your weapons, and cast away fear.
For the cycle *has* ended that witnessed our woes,
And the flesh of the whites shall make food for the crows.

Villagers shout, and the armed tribesmen sing the War Song.

There's a field that invites us, a field full of flowers,
Red are its roses, ensanguined their hues,
Its seedlings are watered with rubescent showers,
Damp is its grass with incarnadine dews.

Its flowers are the war-shield, the axe and the arrow,
Blood is its rain-drops, its dew drips from death.
Fragrant its flowers, but they sprout by the narrow
Grave-pits whose dust-clouds the tillers enwreath.

But the fruits of its flowers are the pride of the living,
Prowess and honor and glory and fame,
And who loses life to his nation is giving
All that in life is deserving of aim.
We long for the battle, we thirst for the slaughter,
We'll join the red revel with hearts full of glee,
We'll smile at our woundings, greet death with loud laughter,
And shout out our song mid the mad jubilee.

Josè. By the saints, Jacinto, were I a young buck, I would sharpen my machete and follow her to the death.

Jacinto. Then thank the saints that you are an old fool and not a young buck. Lucky if

you escape with a whole skin as it is, for to-day commandant Vasquez ordered the wells to be sealed, and if he does not expect the Spanish soldiers in Cancuc, why did he that? We wise ones had better go back to our mules and our maize fields, and leave fighting and fortune-telling to those who are tired of living.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *Plaza of Cancuc. Evening. Magdalena, Geronymo, the Alcalde, villagers; later Vasquez, Antonio, Garcia.*

Geronymo (*to Magdalena*). I fear that villain Vasquez has some scent
Of what a dish of meat I'm cooking for him.
Think you it is his dev'lish nagual
That whispers warnings to his attent ear?

Magdalena. Nay, more likely 'tis that traitor Garcia,
Who to the general has betrayed our plans.
I did not like his dubious parleyings,
And think we must seek other aid than he.

Ger. Why then we'll try the other plan I broached,
And sow sedition 'mongst the common herd—
We'll call a few together and begin.
Friends, friends, come hither, I have learned some news.

Villagers. News! News! Quick! Let us hear the news.

Ger. I met a trader in the valley yonder,
One of the Nahuas—they are friends of ours—
And for that reason weeping sad he was,
That we had entered on this hopeless war.

Villagers. Hopeless! (*Angrily.*)

Ger. Oh! that's his word, not mine,
And I, like you, rebuked him for the term;
But he kept on, and said with tearful face,
"You Tzentals have no chance; a thousand guns
Will mow you down as corn with a machete.
The Chols and Quelens have renounced revolt.
Your only hope is to throw down your arms
And sue for peace and pardon right away."

Vills. Did he say that?

Ger. Indeed he did, and more.
As that, "if Vásquez leads you still astray,
Defeated as he was at Huistlán,
And that conceited babbler of a girl
Fills your dull minds with idle gibberish,
The Church and King will show you little grace
When in their hands you fall, as soon you will."

Vills. By all the saints, he spoke what might be true.

Ger. The time, he said, is short; for yester night
The Spaniards camped within a league of here.

Two hundred horse, a thousand musketeers,
With mighty cannons belching red hot balls.
"What chance," he said again, "is left for you?"

Magdalena. He spoke the truth in every word he said;
And be you not inveigled by my niece,
A wayward chit from earliest girlhood up.
Be not the dupes of her pretentious shams,
Her tricks and lies, and cunning juggleries.
She'd have you think she's half a god herself.
A god! It makes me laugh. Why she's a jade
I've had to switch for stealing out o' nights
And sporting with the boys among the grass.
If you have sense, and want your skins to keep,
You will give heed to what Geronymo says.

[*Enter on one side Vasquez and Antonio.*]

The Alcalde (*aside to Magdalena*). 'Twere wiser, woman, to recall those words;
I see the Virgin's followers around us.

Magdalena (*aside to the Alcalde*). The vipers of our grassy glens, Alcalde,
Attack whatever creatures them approach,
Except the cat, from which they run away:

I am the cat; the Viper's vassals here,
Will not attempt to scratch me with their fangs.

Vills. Oh let us go at once, and urge on Vasquez,
To ope the gates and send a flag of truce.

Ger. There is no help in Vasquez, for his head
Must pay the penalty of this revolt.

Vasquez. Who speaks so freely of my head? Oh you,
Geronymo! You here, and speeching to a crowd!
A thrilling speech for war, no doubt, my friends.

Vills. Good General Vasquez, send a flag of truce,
And ask our pardon of the Spanish king;
We have no chance of winning in this fight,
Geronymo has told us the sad truth.

Vasquez (*to Geronymo*). Traitor and coward, who lurking in this town,
Would ope its portals to the Spanish foe!
As the black scorpion's touch to carrion turns
The flesh of every creature save a dog,
So the foul venom of thy traitorous tongue

Infects the mind of all except the deaf.
And this malignant beldame on your right
Has said the last her shrewish tongue will shape
To thwart the purpose of this righteous war.
Seize her, Anton, and lead her to the gaol.

[*Antonio seizes Magdalena and drags her out screaming.*]

And you, Geronymo, down upon your knees,
Or through your body drives this hungry blade.

Geronymo. (*Kneeling and holding up his hands.*)

Put up your sword, O valiant General Vasquez,
Bring out your cord and lash my wrists in knots.
I meant no harm by anything I said.

[*Vasquez puts up his sword and approaches to tie Geronymo's hands. Geronymo jumps upon him and plunges the dagger to his heart.*]

Take that, you fool, you driv'ling idiot,
To think that I'm so easily caught as that.

[*Escapes into the darkness.*]

Vills. Murder! Murder! Murder!

[*Enter Juan.*]

Juan. What means the shouting of this dreadful word?
Is any body murdered?

Vills. Geronymo's slain our noble general Vasquez.
Our cause is doubly lost, for now,
What leader have we to collect our force,
And bid defiance to the conquering whites?

Juan. Let not despair possess your hearts, oh friends!
We've lost great Vasquez, yet we have with us
As many warriors as we had before,
As true a love for all that we defend,
As sure a faith that in the end we'll win.
And let not anything Geronymo said
Disturb that faith, or make you weak at heart;
For I have proof from out his very mouth,
That he's a traitor, bought by Spanish gold
To sell our village to the hated foe,
And all that he has said are perjured lies.
Disown him, then, and *I* will lead you forth,
To certain victory o'er the Spanish host.

Vills. Hurrah! Hurrah! We'll follow Juan Garcia;
Let Juan Garcia be our general now.

[*Exeunt all but the Alcalde.*]

The Alcalde. This folk are like the spring
Ox Avil Hu,
Which flows three years and then for three is dry;
Only with them the years are turned to days,
And twice a week at least they change their minds.
It tasks, in fact, as able man as I,
The path of profit clearly to descry.

SCENE IV. *The Native Church at Cancuc. A screen of Indian matting, woven in bright colors and strange figures, conceals the back of the stage. In front of it is the altar, bearing upon it the sacred vessels of the Roman Church, flowers, candles and also small idols of the native gods. Around the walls, rude pictures and images of the Virgin and saints, mingled with others of fantastic deities and votive offerings.*

SEBASTIAN, *in the ordinary costume of the Nagual priesthood, as in Act II., Scene II.*

MARIA, *in a rich costume of eccentric character, made up in part from the sacred vestments of the Catholic priesthood.*

Later, Antonio, Juan Garcia, warriors, villagers, acolytes.

Gomez (*alone*). At length the clouds are parting overhead,
The bright sun shines, the signs are all benign.
Vasquez is dead, whose weakness I perceived
When he would stay the slaughter at Chilun ;
And Magdalena too, a troublous wench.
We've captured Juan Garcia and he
Will ably carry out our plans for war.
He foiled the subtle plot Geronymo laid,
And gave new courage to the weakening hearts.

They ask that he shall lead us to the fray—
And fitter man than he 'twere hard to find.

[*Enter Juan Garcia and Antonio, escorted by a group of warriors and followed by the populace.*]

Antonio. Reverend master of our ancient cult,
And guardian of our race in this revolt,
Since Nicolas Vasquez lives to lead no more,
We ask that in his place you consecrate
Our fellow tribesman, Juan Garcia, here.
His heart knows nothing but the love of ours,
And hate of all that our oppressors love.
He's skilled in arms and potent in his speech
To fire dull souls and drive dark doubt away.

Warriors. Let Juan Garcia be our chief elect.

Vills. Yes, Juan Garcia is our only choice.

Gomez. My friends, your wishes fill me with content.
Long have I known that worthy Juan Garcia
Is bold and able, strong in speech, and fit
To foil the foe and win us back our freedom.
But in such weighty matters, tis not I,
Nor yet Maria, makes the final choice;

But tis the gods themselves, who speak, indeed,
Through her inspiréd voice; for thus it was
In ancient days, before the whites arrived,
That woman ever stood the nearest God,
And ruled the holiest of our mysteries;
So is it now, and I must see Maria,
And learn what sacred whispers she is hearing.

[*Goes behind the curtain and reappears, leading Maria in a trance.*]

Gomez. Even as I entered, friends and fellow townsmen,
I found her slowly waking from a trance,
Filled with the spirit of our ancient gods,
And with the knowledge of what is to be;
You need not ask her what you wish to know;
She wants no mortal speech to be acquaint
With all that passes in your heart of hearts,—
List! and be silent, for the god will speak.

Maria (*in a trance*). A traitor's hand you see? A bloody knife?
Then ponder this from me—through Death comes Life.
Of battles lost you hear? Your men in flight?
Be not perturbed by fear; the gods do right.

Why roars the raging rain, the winter's flood,
But that the spring again shall make all good?

[*Waking from the trance.*]

Ah, you are here, my friends, and I know well
That which your hearts are leaping forth to tell.
For while I watched the Tortoise yesternight,
The future shone before me clear in sight.
I saw our warriors burn the Spanish towns,
Strangle the bishops, rend their priestly gowns,
Their men and women whelmed beneath their towers,
From sea to sea the land was wholly ours.
A banner saw I spread our troops before,
And on it Juan Garcia's name they bore!

Warriors. Long live Juan, Juan Garcia here.

Vills. Hurrah, hurrah, for Juan Garcia here.

Gomez. I told you that she knows the hidden speech,
Fraught with the future of our tribe and race.
And now in solemn form she will anoint
The daring captain chosen by the gods
To lead you forth to certain victory.
Juan, advance.

[*Juan approaches Gomez.*]

Are you preparéd at this súpreme hour,
To cast aside all other thought or aim
Than that of freeing our oppresséd race
From their long slavery to the tyrant whites?

Juan. With all my heart and soul I am.

Gomez. And in this dread and desperate intent,
Will you dismiss all weaknesses of heart
That lean toward mercy and enfeebling ruth?

Juan. Whatever *she* commands, the gods' beloved,
Blindly obedient, will I carry out.

Gomez. Then kneel, Juan, that on thy chosen front
The blessed oil shall christen thee her knight.

[*Juan kneels. Maria approaches, and with her finger dipped in the oil makes the sign of the cross on his forehead.*]

Maria. (*Chants.*)
Black god of night and desolating war,
Whose breath is flame, whose eyes as torches are—
Among thy captains I this warrior name,
Fighter for freedom and the Indians' rights;
Grant him, O Ical, the illustrious fame
Of driving from our land the hated whites.

Warriors and Populace. (*Chorus.*)

Grant him, O Ical, the illustrious fame,
Of driving from our land the hated whites.

[*Gomez hands Maria a naked sword. Juan rises. Maria approaching Juan presents him the sword.*]

Maria. (*Sings.*)

Take this falchion, let its gleaming
Dazzle other eyes than mine ;
When the war-bird shrill is screaming,
Let the foremost place be thine.
When the Spaniards surge in masses,
On the Indians' rank and file,
As the storm in mountain passes
Hurls the branches pile on pile;
Let this dripping blade be busy
Mowing down the foemen pale,
Till affrighted, awe-struck, dizzy,
None is left to tell the tale.
Then returning, free, victorious,
Bring it back to me again ;
I shall grant a great and glorious
Guerdon for thy toil and pain.

(*Speaks.*) Now shall we sanctify this sacred pledge

With reverent rite and solemn sacrament,
In our new ritual by the gods revealed.

[*She advances before the altar, raising the crucifix and the serpent symbol together in both hands in the posture of the priest with the host. Acolytes wave the incensory, ring the bell and strew flowers. Music by the marimbas.*]

The Acolytes Sing.

Strophe.

Through twice a century's wearisome years
We wept and sighed in silence and tears,
Crushed to earth by impotent fears.

Antistrophe.

But now as the sun dispels the night,
As the darkness flees from the morning light,
Our fears are dispelled and we dare to fight.

Strophe.

With flames eterne and menace of hell,
With fastings and penance, and sermon and cell,
Our wretched souls did the priests compel.

Antistrophe.

Hail to our gods who have come again,
They will drive the Christians back to Spain,
Ending our long and bitter pain.

Chorus.

So hand in hand,
A joyous band,
We sing of the liberty of our land.
Out of the snare,
As free as the air,
For king and for priest we no more care.

Maria (*advances to the front*). As I uplift
the sacred crucifix
And mate it with the serpent in my hands,
It is to teach you that both faiths proceed
From One alone who is the only God.
As He is one above, so on the earth,
One faith alone can possibly be true;
And this can be that only which admits
No preference of sex, or race or blood,
But stands all equal in their rights and rules,
Before the throne of Him who is eterne.
To teach this, I, an Indian and a maid,
Have been ordained these rites to solemnize.

Song by the Acolytes.
Strophe.

Soon priests shall pass away,
Churches decay;
Hell shall no more affright
Children of light.

Wise masters then shall teach,
Wise women then shall preach,
Love for the right.

Antistrophe.

On God alone shall call,
Worshippers all;
Creeds that are taught to-day,
Passing away;
One faith alone will then
Find a response in men—
Labor and pray.

Chorus.

All that inspires the true and good,
The love that lives for every man,
That welds the bonds of brotherhood,
Or friendship's pleasing flames will fan—
Spirits, grant that such may be
Our warrants for eternity.

Maria.

As the thirsty plain pants for the rain,
So pray we panting to God on high,
That He gives us a sign of His love divine
And grant our chieftain victory.

[*Recessional, headed by Maria, Garcia, Gomez and Antonio, then acolytes and congregation.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The Spanish Camp. Father Simon, Don Nicolas de Segovia; later Balthasar, Geronymo.*

Father Simon. Most strange it is what power
the Devil hath,
To lead astray these wretched Indian souls.
They claim that by this wicked mutiny
They seek escape from cruel and bitter rule.
They dug a pit, and in it they have fallen.
The cruelest of our laws were mild as milk
Compared to what this hell-hag makes them
suffer.
She ordered Lopez flayed alive for nought
Than for purloining some few trumpery rags
Which she had claimed as part of her own
share.
She had three natives roasted o'er slow fires,
Merely for rumored sympathy with Spain.
Nor has she pitied her own flesh and blood,
But sent to sudden death her worthy aunt
For chiding faithfully her mutinous lies.

Don Nicolas. Reverend father, through your
Christian grace,
Your eyes are blinded to the actual state

Of the degraded natives of this land;
And were it not that oft such mildness wins
A general welcome in your ghostly caste,
Such a revolt as this would not have been.
Though with a soul, the Indian is a brute,
Responding to no chord of Christian love,
Despising what is good, insensible to grace,
Not to be governed by a saintly sweetness,
But only by the pangs of fear and pain,
By scourge and sword and prison bars.
Would that the reverend clergy saw this clear,
And led their flocks by stringent discipline.

Father Simon. I now recall that almost what you say,
Was also writ by Father Cogolludo,
A learned brother of our blessed order.
But I have ever thought the blood of Christ
Was shed, and not in vain, for every race,
And can turn any man to faith and love,
Virtue and charity, be he ne'er so vile.

Don Nicolas. 'Tis not for me to doubt that holy Church
Has boundless wisdom for all worthy aims.
But as a ruler of these Indian dogs,
I'd rather trust a sabre than a mass.

[*Enter Balthasar.*]

Bal. Again has come to camp, most worthy general,
The Indian spy, and brings us from Cancuc
Tidings of mutiny 'mongst the native troops.

Don Nic. (*To Balthasar*). Let him come in.

(*Bal. retires. Don Nic. to Father Simon.*) And such as he,
Nor worse nor better, every Indian is;
Without affection even for his own,
Disloyal, plotting, given up to vice.

[*Enter Balthasar with Geronymo.*]

Don Nic. (*To Ger.*). How now, you treacherous hound, why brought you not,
The charm I asked from villain Vasquez' neck?
Play you a double game, and spy you here
To tell it to your virgin of Cancuc?
Were I not loath your blood besmirched my floor,

[*Draws his sword.*]

I'd make this broken promise be your last.

Geronymo (*falls on his knees*). I pray you spare me, worthy general;
All have I carried out that man could do.
Vasquez I've killed, and mutiny aroused

Among the timid people of the town.
They wandered leaderless, and now at length
Have taken up a fop, a beardless boy,
Their virgin's paramour and bed-companion,
Whom she's appointed to command the troops.
Fire but a musket, and he'll run away,
And his brave soldiers follow in hot haste.

Don Nic. A worse report than this you might have made.
And how about the secret path to-night?

Geron. By all the saints, the plan was fully laid,
When she was murdered, who should ope the gate.

Don Nic. A lie, of course; but you deceive me not,
Nor care I whether you speak false or true.
It is more seemly to my noble blood,
In open day to smoke these rebels out
Their holes and hiding places in Cancuc.
We'll take the walls by storm, and woe to him
Who's found in arms against the King of Spain.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *Plaza of Cancuc. Jacinto, José, the Alcalde ; later, Juan Garcia, Antonio, Warriors, Villagers.*

Jacinto. Worthy Alcalde, is it true the Spaniards
Have seized two virgins sent by our Maria
To preach the faith, and hanged them both as witches ?

Alcalde. Pooh! Pooh! I know not this. Such foolish tales—
And they are legion—interest me not.
(*Aside.*) This were bad fortune for our pretty maids ;
No tree was ever graced with finer fruit!

José. They tell me also that Don Nicolas,
Has sent a cryer to the upper towns,
Proclaiming pardon to all swearing fealty,
And death to all in arms against the king.

Alcalde (*uneasily*). No such cryer has appeared in Cancuc ;
His earliest duty was to come to me,
At once, to ask permission for his cry.
(*Aside.*) From such a one I could find out for sure

Which side is likelier in this race to win ;
And that's the side I wish to light upon.

[*Enter Garcia, Antonio, warriors, populace.*]

Garcia (*to Antonio*). Find you the people ready for the fray ?

Antonio. Not with the firmness that I should have liked.
They are discouraged by the rumors spread,
That, reinforced by many men at arms,
Don Nicolas aims to take us by assault,
And burn the village as he did San Martin.

Garcia. Such is, in fact, the plan he contemplates,
As I from trusty sources have it learned ;
And better 'twere at once to put a stop
To swollen rumors by a dose of truth.
(*To the Alcalde.*) Señor Alcalde, will you summon hither
Whoever in the town is fully minded
To stand in battle 'gainst our tyrant foes.
The hour has come when every villager
Must risk his life to save our noble cause.

Alcalde. Most worthy General Garcia, I obey,
And straight shall order they assemble here.

(*Aside.*) I see no way how I can 'scape the task.

Juan (*aside*). Now must I try my last appeal to these
Half-hearted followers of our glorious lead.
(*To Antonio.*) Come hither, Anton, when I give this sign;
Shout loudly thou and all thy warriors here;
For such example will encourage those
Who otherwise would fear to join our ranks.

[*The populace assembles.*]

Garcia (*to the populace*). Words that are welcome would I speak, O friends,
Welcome to all who've labored for the ends
We've ever toiled for in this righteous war.
Be joyous, friends, the end's no longer far;
The end is close, and in two days, at most,
We shall have scattered wide the Spanish host.
We will await them first behind our wall,
There by our weapons full the half will fall;
Should they succeed in entering the town,
'Twill only lead them to destruction on.
The wells are sealed; we'll set the town afire,
And to the rough barranca we'll retire;
There, if they follow, we will hurl them down,

Where in the raging waters they will drown.
In either case, my friends, we'll win the day;
We'll drive the pale face backward in dismay.
The lesson learned so well they'll not repeat,
A second time again to find defeat.

Antonio and Warriors. Hurrah! Hurrah!
'Tis thus the war will end.

Villagers. (*Faintly*). Hurrah! Hurrah!
We'd gladly see it end.

The Alcalde (*to Antonio*). I liked not,
Anton, what he said of burning.
I am Alcalde now, but of what town
Am I Alcalde, if Cancuc is burned?

Antonio. Have you no feeling for the general good?
To see our cause triumphant would you not
Yourself apply the torch to these poor huts?

Alcalde. Myself? Burn Cancuc? Now I fully see,
That you're as madly mad as mad can be!

Antonio. (*To Garcia*). Something of weakness in the crowd I feel.
Were it not better, general, to insist,
That choosing twixt surrender and a fight,
The fight alone will offer any chance?

Garcia. I see the wisdom of the hint you give—
Another word before we part, my friends;
You know how always merciless and cruel
Vindictive, unforgiving, bloody-deeded,
Has been the Spanish treatment of the Indian,
Whenever he opposed their slightest laws.
Bethink you then what fate awaits us now,
What torments, tortures, massacres, and burnings,
Should we in this revolt admit defeat.
A thousand times 'twere safer fighting on
Than yield and suffer from their tiger claws.

Antonio and Warriors. Hurrah! Hurrah! We'll battle till the death.

Villagers (*Faintly*). Hurrah! Hurrah! Perhaps tis better so.

[*Exeunt all but the Alcalde.*]

Alcalde (*alone*). This comes of choosing a hot blooded youth
To rule a reckless band of arméd men.
A man of wisdom, knowing well the world,
Risks not his fortune on a single throw.
'Twere well for me to write to Father Simon,
Professing I am powerless at this juncture.

The house whose walls the widening cracks
divide,
The builder skilled will prop on every side.

SCENE III. *The Forest near Cancuc. Moonlight. Maria and Juan Garcia.*

Maria. I could not, Juan, list your urgent prayer
To meet you at this spot and say it nay;
Yet doubt I deeply that 'tis right in us,
At this filled time and with the foe so near,
To waste the moments o'er our own affairs.

Juan. O say not so, my love, for one short hour
Let us unloose the passions of our hearts.
One kiss from thee, one lingering, long embrace,
I needs must have to nerve me to the time
When I and Death must meet, to-morrow morn.

Maria (*slightly shuddering*). Is it then certain that to-morrow's sun
Will gaze upon the bloody battlefield?

Juan. I am informed that at the hour of noon
Segovia's army will attack our walls.
To-day his troopers heard a solemn mass
And each confessed his sins and pardon asked,
In preparation for the final fray.
The grinning figure of the God of Bones
May meet me in the foremost battle file.

This hour may be the last for joy and thee.
Oh let us quaff the cup, ere it be dashed
In fragments down by his remorseless hands.

Maria. Speak not such words, dear Juan,
speak them not;
It cannot be the gods will thus forsake
Me, whom they sought, and chose, and singled
out
Of many thousand maids, to speak their will
And lead our nation to a nobler life.

Juan. Neither for Christian nor for heathen
gods
Care I at all. Thou art my only god;
To thee alone my orisons are offered;
'Tis thou alone can'st save or wreck my soul;
The sun to me were dark shouldst thou be lost;
Heaven itself were hell wert thou not there.
Love is my god, Maria, love of thee!
O love, forget not, this may be the last—
For no one knows what battles have in store—
The last embraces we shall ever give.
Let this last moment by a súpreme joy
Bid bold defiance to what death can do.
Let me enlock thy body in my arms,
A mutual sacrament of love to love.

Maria (*Restraining him, and loosening his hands*).

I too, O love, cherish no higher wish,
Ask for no richer fruitage of my life,
Than on thy bosom let my forehead rest,
And sink in sweet entrancement in thine arms.
And dear it were to me, O darling Juan,
To gather many babes upon my knees,
Thy babes and mine, and see them grow apace,
Strong youths and merry girls, to found a race
Neath the free sky of our unfettered land.

Hope I in vain, and should the gods decree
That in the bloody rout to-morrow morn,
Thou art borne lifeless from the sanguine field,
And I survive to moan that utter ruin,
Bitterest of all my bitter griefs will be
That from this fragrant flower and sweetest cup
I failed the odorous honey-dew to quaff.

If thou art lost, Juan, and I survive,
Far from my kin I'll pass my darkened days,
And chroniclers who seek in after years—
Gleaning the fragments of our native lore—
To learn what happened to the Indian maid,
Who bade defiance to the King of Spain,
When her brave warriors fell before the foe—
Nought will they write, for none will be to tell,

Her life, though living on, was ended then,
When Juan Garcia lived to love no more.
So long the yoke of Spain still galls our necks,
The gods have warned me that I must abide
As pure a virgin as the Holy Maid
When angels brought her tidings from on high
That in her womb the Son of God was laid.
Urge me no further, dearest, did I yield
Death and disaster swift would dash our joy.

Juan (*dejectedly*). How can I see in this thy love for me?
Did but the thousandth part of passion's flame
Blaze in thy heart as now consumeth mine,
Such cold computing of the future's chance
Would never rob the present of its joy.

Maria. Little of joy I know, but hard indeed,
Hardest of all to bear, is this from thee.
To thee in soul I turned when men maligned
My acts and called me hard and cruel.

[*Rises and speaks in rapture.*]

How could I spare the foe when, lest the cause be lost,
I have not spared my kin, nor yet myself nor thee?
With fasting and with stripes I've tamed my body down

Lest any thought of sense should darken the divine,
The holy light within, that leads me straightly on
To do the will of God and leave all else aside.
Look ! Juan, at these arms, and tell me clearly, now
If such as these are meet for amorous embrace ?

[*Shows her arms scarred and bruised with repeated flagellation.*]

Juan (*kneels before her*). Forgive me, darling, the weak words I said,
The shameful words, unknowing what I spake.
More than the love of man, a love divine,
I bear to thee, O goddess of my soul ;
More than a mortal now I see thou art,
And more than mortal love shall fill my heart ;
To work thy will my utmost aim shall be,
Finding my full reward in loving thee.

SCENE IV. *Summit of the barranca of Cancuc. Juan Garcia bleeding from a wound, Antonio, warriors; later, Maria, Gomez, villagers, Don Nicolas, Father Simon, Geronymo and Spanish soldiery.*

Juan. Take your position there, Antonio;
Behind those rocks, a dozen sturdy fellows
Can break the heads of half a hundred Spaniards,
As they climb slowly up the narrow footway.

[*Enter villagers in disorder, crying and groaning.*]

Courage, my friends, we have not lost the day;
Go farther up the slope, and from its summit
You'll see us hurl the Spanish soldiers down
To where the raging waters wait their bones.

Antonio. I fear me, General, that the main attack
Will be by circuit of the deep ravine,
Flanking our trenches by the forest road.

Juan. The path is devious, known to very few,
And nought but treachery in the Cancuc folk
Could find a guide to thread the winding way.

[*Enter Maria in half armor carrying a drawn sword, Gomez with a serpent wand, his face painted black and red. Populace follow them, in fright and disorder.*]

Maria (*in a low voice to Juan*). Oh! Juan, thou dost bleed, oh! tell me true,
Where is thy hurt? is it a dangerous wound?
Secretly draining thy dear life away?

Juan. 'Tis but a scratch, my love, a pike was thrust
Into the muscle of my upper arm.
My right has still its power to wield
The sword entrusted to my hands by thee.
But like the golden well of Custepec,
A grateful balm, they say, to fevered wounds,
Charming away the pain by cooling lave,
Does thy sweet presence heal my smarting flesh.

Maria. Oh Juan, now I see thy garments stained
With the red blood which drippeth from thy wound,
All my unconquered nature faints and falls,
And all the world I'd give, and all my hopes
Of fame and freedom, greatness and command,

If thou and I were living far away
From war and tumult, in some lonely glade,
Each to the other being all in life.

[*Weeps.*]

Juan. Weep not, Maria; when I see thy tears,
Despair and desolation rend my heart;
The gods have forced us to this fateful hour;
And if they do not lend their puissant aid,
Our cause is lost, and thou and I are slain.

Maria. Listen, Juan, when all we hope *is* lost,
Live thou at least for love and life with me;
O'er the barranca's spiked and dizzy edge
Hang trailing vines a narrow ledge before,
Which leads within to where our gods are shrined.
Seize thou the vine, 'tis tough as hempen rope,
And swing in boldly till the ledge is gained.

Garcia. What would I do, my love, for life and thee?
But, love, my helpless arm and trickling blood declare
That I must win this field or here must lie.

Maria. And I shall never leave thee, love, in life.

Gomez. Come, come, Maria, stand not thus apart,
When frightened women scream to you for help,
And fighting menfolk ask for vig'rous words
To lend them sinews in the coming fray.

[*Maria goes toward some fugitives and encourages them.*]

Antonio (*running in*) (*to Garcia*). Alas! alas! The worst I feared has come.
The Spaniards turn our trenches on the right,
Led by some traitor, by some caitiff hound,
Who showed the way along the forest trail.

[*Discharge of muskets. Screams and groans. Warriors in retreat hurry across the stage. Enter Don Nicolas de Segovia, wounded; Father Simon, Balthasar, Geronymo and Spanish soldiers.*]

Don Nicolas. Give orders, Balthasar, to spare the lives
Of all who yield and cast their weapons down.
Good Father Simon brings the bishop's mandate
To treat with mercy this deluded folk,
And punish only those who hatched revolt.

[*Balthasar restrains the soldiery.*]

Don Nicolas (*To Geronymo*). Stay you by me, and if you want your pay,
Show me at once the arch conspirators,
The pagan Gomez and the witch his neice,
Her leman Garcia, and his man Anton;
We have them penned, and by the holy cross,
This time they'll not escape the rope or stake.

Geronymo. The witch Maria see in armor clad;
Her uncle he, who's painted red and black;
And that is Garcia nearing with drawn sword.

Don Nicolas (*To Garcia*). Give up that sword or in a moment more
A bullet speeds your soul to nether hell.
Yield you at once, or by the saints above,
The breath you're breathing now will be your last.

Garcia (*approaching with his sword reversed as if to surrender it*). Don Nicolas de Segovia, plain it is,
That not a slightest hope remains for us;
Yet ere I yield and give you up my sword,
I have one final duty to perform—
To plunge it deeply in this traitor's heart.

[*Kills Geronymo.*]

Don Nicolas (*to Balthasar*). Quick, Balthasar, shoot me this murderer dead.

[*Balthasar fires; Garcia falls dead.*]

Maria (*rushes forward*). The wrath of all the gods I hurl upon you,
You Christian dogs and murderous miscreants!
You've slain a hero nobler than your king.
May the high heavens pour their curses down
As thick as hailstones in a summer storm
When Huracán lets loose the raging winds,
On you and all your race and kin.

Father Simon. Silence Maria, dare you thus to speak
To me, who taught your infant lips to pray;
To me, your priest and father in the Lord,
Who poured the holy water on your head,
And thus assured your soul to heavenly life
If you resisted the allures of hell?
Kneel down before this token and proclaim

[*Lifts up the crucifix; soldiers kneel, Maria stands.*]

To all here present that you now abjure
The devil and his works that threat your soul.

Maria (*lapses into a trance*). Oh! foolish priest! my mind is filled with light,

A heavenly light, through which I see afar
To after ages, when a greater God
Than any that thou knowest shall instruct
A wider charity for all men's creeds.
Your church no longer shall enslave their minds,
Your king's commandments find no echo here;
Our race shall breathe in freedom once again,
From their own lineage choosing their own lords;
All this I see, and then my dismal tale
Will draw sad tears from sympathetic eyes
And touch in kindly hearts responsive chords.

Don Nicolas. Enough we've heard of this girl's pestilent rant.
Close in upon them, soldiers, drive them up,
And capture both alive, that later sentence
May smite them with a fitting penalty.

[*Soldiers close in, Maria and Gomez retire slowly to the edge of the barranca and at a signal between them, spring over it.*]

Father Simon. Oh blessed Saints! They've dashed themselves to death.
Upon the jagged fragments far below.

Don Nic. Such a conclusion had I not foreseen.

Go quickly, Balthasar, and leaning outward,
See where their broken bodies may have fallen.

Balthasar. (*Looks over the edge of the precipice*).

Nothing at all I see, nothing alive or dead;
The wall falls sheer a hundred varas down,
Scarce room for here and there some clambering vine—
But yes! I mark a tiger slinking up the glen,
A yellow serpent sliding o'er the sand.

Father Simon (*crossing himself*). Well do I know these diabolic signs:—
These are their naguals, for by Satan's aid,
The cunning sorcerers of their damnéd sect
Can take at will the shape of bird or beast;
As many a sinner dying has confessed,
To save his soul from endless punishment.

Don Nicolas. More likely, reverend Father, in some crack
Or hidden fissure of the rocky wall,
A scanty foothold leads to some retreat.
I know their crafty wiles, and I misgive
That from our trap the tricky birds have flown.
Yet if they sprang right out in middle air,
And lie in fragments on the rocks below,

'Twere but what thousands of their nation did,
When first we twisted their rebellious necks
In slow submission to the Spanish yoke.
At any rate, they're gone; and let them go,
The war is ended, and we've whipped the foe.

NOTES.

Act I.

Scene I: *The second planting month.*—The Tzentals still divide the solar year into 18 months of 20 days each, beginning about the vernal equinox. For their names, etc., see my *Native Calendar of Central America*, pp. 40–42.

The holy tapir.—This animal was worshipped by the natives of Chiapas, probably as a solar symbol. See my *Primer of Mayan Hieroglyphics*, pp. 54, 138.

His eagle floating in the air.—This incident is stated to have occurred at the battle of Quetzaltenango. Fuentes y Guzman, *Recordacion Florida*, Tom. I., p. 50.

Mestizo, coyote.—A *mestizo* is a half-breed from a white father and full-blood Indian mother; a *coyote* is the child of a mestizo and a full-blood native.

Scene II: *The mystic book, our people's book.*—The *Popol Vuh*, at once a record of the past and a prophecy for the future. Bishop de Landa describes the method of divination by the sacred books. *Relacion de Yucatan*, p. 287.

The primal water.—The *yax ha*, or holy water employed in divination.

The gleaming crystal.—The *zaz tun*, or white stone, a favorite mode of augury. By gazing at it fixedly the future would be revealed. Apolinar Garcia y Garcia, *Historia de la Guerra de Castas de Yucatan*, p. xxiv, note, gives particulars.

The sacred numbers. The judicial astrology of the Mayas and neighboring nations was based on numerical relations drawn from the sacred calendar of 260 days. The method is described by Father Juan de Cordova, *Arte Zapoteco*, p. 202, 214.

The herbs.—I have described these and their effects in the essay on *Nagualism.*

SCENE III: *The pious brethren.*—The narrative of the massacre of the priests named is taken principally from Juarros, *Historia de Guatemala.*

The jade he wears.—Many of the natives continue to wear an amulet of stone or shell as a preservative against evil influences.

SCENE IV: *The Invocations.*—Most of the native gods mentioned in the invocations are described in the introduction, § 4.

Judas, Satan, Antichrist.—Nuñez de la Vega, bishop of Chiapas, says in his work, *Constituciones Diocesanas*, p. 19, that he discovered among the Tzentals written formulas appealing to these supposed enemies of the Christian doctrine to aid the native sorcerers to destroy it.

The Elemental forces.—In the myths of the Nahuas and Mayas the universe has been destroyed four times, by fire, air (the winds), earth (earthquakes) and water (the deluge), as each of these elements gained the ascendency. The present is the fifth age of the world. The characterization of these elemental forces in the text is drawn from the invocations of the nagualists preserved by Father de la Serna in his *Manual de Ministros*, who also mentions the five fingers as called the "five fates."

The reciprocal principles of nature.—The doctrine of sexuality among the gods and throughout both the animate and inanimate world was profoundly rooted in both Mayan and Mexican theology.

The sacred three, etc.—The triad or trinity in native American mythology is well known. (See my *Myths of the New World*, pp. 84, 187, etc.) The cosmos, or heaven and earth, consisted of nine degrees or stages, therefore Nezahualcoyotl, Prince of Tezcuco, represented it by a tower of nine stories. (See my *Ancient Nahuatl Poetry*, p. 36.) In the Mayan mythology the tree of life is in the center of the earth-plane, and from it four streams carry the life-giving waters.

To the mother of all, etc.—The All-Mother was Cohuacihuatl, the serpent-woman, goddess of birth and also of death (Sahagun). The eagle-woman, Quauhcihuatl, was a goddess of war. She sometimes also bore the name of the Serpent Woman. The "specter maids" were the *tzitzime*, who, in a prophecy recorded by Sahagun, shall finally destroy the present universe.

That stream which flows toward Balancan.—This stream is mentioned by Torquemada, *Monarquia Indiana*, Lib. XIV., cap. 38, and various later writers.

As in that mountain cleft near Comitan.—This is the so-called "Pozo-airon," and the story about its powerful attraction is told in all soberness by Pineda, *Descripcion Geografica de Chiapas*, p. 21.

The quetzal bird.—The beautiful bird, the *Trogon resplendens*, was formerly often seen near San Cristobal. Its note was heard only in the early spring. Pineda, u. s., p. 30.

Act II.

Scene I: *By the holy grandmother of God.*—That is, St. Anne, who is called by Spanish writers, *la Santa Abuela de Dios.* Her life was written and published in Mexico by Father Valdes (1794).

Scene II: *The costume of the serpent woman.*—This is taken chiefly from Sahagun. Montanus (quoted by Bancroft) describes a kind of snake called *ibobaca* which the inhabitants of Chiapas wore living around their necks. The serpent wand is a crooked stick, not unlike the *atlatl*, or throwing stick. I have figured it in *Mayan Hieroglyphics*, p. 103.

Song of the Acolytes.—Paraphrased from a Nahuatl war song given in my *Ancient Nahuatl Poetry.*

What fine examples these same padres set.—That the words here put in the mouth of the Indian Gomez are not exaggerated, may be shown by the following extract from a clerical biography of one of the bishops of Yucatan in the last century: "The ignorance and demoralization of the clergy, the scandalous conduct of the Franciscan monks, the utterly wretched condition of the Indians and the unrestrained libertinage which prevailed could not but cause the bishop serious anxieties." (Quoted in Apolinar Garcia y Garcia, *Historia de la Guerra de castas de Yucatan*, p. xxix.) This writer adds that it was quite customary to brand the natives with hot irons, and the penalty for the lightest offences was one hundred blows!

Mighty Ococingo, etc.—The imposing ruins of Ococingo have been described by Stephens and later travelers.

Comocalco was visited and photographed by Charnay. Nachan is one of the native names of the famous ruins of Palenque. It means "House of the Serpents." According to the engineer Marciano Barrera, in his *Apuntes sobre los Rios de Usumacinta*, the whole country between Palenque and Tenosique is littered with the remains of walls, mounds, and city sites, now concealed by the dense tropical jungle.

The cycle is ending, etc.—Paraphrased from a Mayan prophecy, of which I have given the original and a literal translation in the Introduction to Prof. Cyrus Thomas' *Manuscript Troano* (Washington, 1882,).

The war song.—Paraphrased from one given in my *Ancient Nahuatl Poetry*.

SCENE III: *The Nahuas.*—The Aztecs of Mezico, who were and are the principal traders of Chiapas and Tabasco.

The vipers of our grassy glens, etc.—The alleged fact is vouched for by Pineda, *Descrip. Geograf.* p. 25.

As the black scorpion's touch, etc.—Another of Pineda's assertions, id. p. 25.

The spring ox avil hu.—These words mean "three years' water." According to Herrera, *Historia de las Indias*, Dec. IV., p. 165, and also later writers, there is a stream or spring near San Christobal which alternately remains dry and flows for three years at a time.

SCENE IV: *I watched the tortoise.*—Certain of the stars in the constellation Gemini were called by the Mayas *acek*, the tortoise stars, and were regarded as divinatory.

Grant him, O Ical.—See the introductory section on the mythology of the Tzentals.

Act III.

Scene I: *She ordered Lopez, etc.*—These statements of the cruel orders of Maria are principally from the account by Father Pedro Garcia; but there is no reason to doubt them.

Father Cogolludo.—The author of a *Historia de Yucatan*, in the 17th century.

Scene II: *Seized two virgins.*—The priestesses of Yajalon and Hueteopan. Garcia Pelaez, *Memorias Historicas*, Tom. II., p. 153, etc.

Scene III: *The God of Bones.*—In the Mayan manuscripts the god of death is usually pictured as a skeleton, and is called *Chamay Bac*, "Teeth and Bones."

Scene IV. *His face painted red and black.*—This custom in Chiapas is described by Bancroft. *Native Races*, Vol. I., p. 649.

The golden well of Custepec.—The "agua del Dorado," a fountain in the valley of Custepec (Quistepeque) is celebrated for its beneficial effects in disease and its sanative power on wounds. Pineda, *Descripcion Geografica*, p. 42.

When Huracan, etc.—The god of the tropical storms, the thunder and the whirlwind in Guatemala was Hurakan, possibly a Carib word. *Popol Vuh*, Chap. II.

From their own lineage choosing their own lords.—The republics of Mexico and Guatemala have elected at various times full-blooded Indians as presidents.

T'were but what thousands of their nation did.—See the Introduction.

Maria Candelaria

D. G. Brinton

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